Fragrant they entered and fell into my arms

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Fragrant they entered and fell into my arms

by purplesocrates

Summary

semi-hiatus... don't rush me now...

Will Graham, an aspiring soprano, is just beginning his first year at the University of Michigan. Will is an omega and has lied about it on his application. Hannibal is an alpha but no one apart from Jack Crawford who hired him knows this.

Omega's are seen as abnormal, on the fringes of society. They are in the minority and most people find them disturbing. Alpha's, too, are seen as unusual, they can be violent and untrustworthy. Most of the world's population is beta and anything else is seen as fringe and strange.

To make matters worse for Will, his father decided he should present as female for most of his childhood despite feeling more masculine. It has taken Will time and getting through some toxic relationships to figure out who he is. University is his chance to start afresh with new people and a new life. Of course, things are never that simple for Will...

Hannibal was married for many years but his wife died of an illness and he has since been alone. He still sees the ghost of his wife and she speaks to him, mocking him mostly. He doesn't even entertain the idea of another relationship until Will Graham appears in his life.

Notes

Written for the Hannibal bingo. The square University of Michegan.

This is finished and will be posted regularly. Not sure of a schedule yet but it will be weekly.

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

Chapter 1

It’s raining, the torrential kind, making you feel as if your very bones are wet. Will, solely focused on getting out of this rain and finding the lecture hall he's supposed to be at, is not paying attention to anything around him. After running in the rain, he eventually gets to the music department, a large concrete building that looks hugely intimidating. It's his first proper day of classes, and nerves are getting to him, not helped by the fact that he looks like a drowned rat. He stands in the foyer and looks at his, now slightly damp, schedule to double-check which lecture hall he needs. Rechecking the time, he curses, *I'm going to be late on my first day.* A man appears as he starts to look around desperately for a map or a sign as to where the right room is.

"Excuse me?" he says, rather desperately.

The man stops and looks at him sympathetically. "Yes, are you lost?"

"I'm trying to find SR2."

"Up the stairs, on the right," the man says and smiles.

"Thank you!" Will rushes past him, finding the room just in time and not late, with jeans clinging to his legs, coat dripping a trail behind him, hair stuck to his face with a mixture of rainwater and sweat, he manages to find a seat at the back. Shucking off his coat, he sits down and starts to root through his bag for a pen and notepad, and hopefully, a hairbrush so he can sort the sodden mess of his dark, unruly hair out. It was sunny when he left, and he felt like feeling the breeze in his hair. Obviously, as he was halfway through the walk, it had started to tip it down.

"Here, I always have one lurking at the bottom of my bag."

He looks to his left at the girl sitting next to him, smiling broadly and holding out a battered-looking hairbrush. She's petite and very pretty, with dark eyes and hair.

"Thank you so much you're a lifesaver," Will says and takes the brush and runs it through his hair.

"No problem, this weather is a nightmare." The girl has a lovely gentle way about her, a glint in her eye and kindness there.

"It was sunny when I left!"

The girl laughs and nods. "I'm Alana, by the way."

"Nice to meet you. I'm Will," he says and hands her the brush back.

"Which degree course are you taking?" Alana asks.

"Music and Theatre Arts," Will replies, and Alana smiles and makes Will think she's already decided they are going to be firm friends.

"I'm doing music therapy," Alana responds. “But I love the theatre. I want to get involved in the theatre here."

"That's my plan too. I'm an opera singer. Well, want to be."

“That's amazing. I do some singing and acting."

"Have you decided on your other modules? I was thinking about doing a music therapy component." Will asks as he's still torn on a few.

"You definitely should! As for the others, mostly," Alana replies, "but I'm still a bit torn on which other class to take. Neither of them seems particularly inspiring."

"Yeah, I don't know the other professors either. I chose this one because I heard good things about Lecter. Obviously, Crawford is the Head of the Department, so I'm leaning more towards him. Still, Chilton's approach sounds unorthodox."

"After this, let's go and grab some lunch and figure out what our last module should be. Two heads are better than one!" Alana leans in and whispers. "If I'm honest, you seem like the most normal person here. I swear if I see one more Mozart-in-the-Jungle wannabe, I'm going to scream!"

Will laughs and points to himself, a current disaster in wet jeans, plaid shirt and ratty hair. "I can safely say I'm not that!"

They smile at each other. "Lunch it is," Alana speaks firmly.

The door to the hall is closed as the Professor walks in, the loud chatter reduced to a murmur. Professor Lecter sets up his laptop and projector. Will and Alana are right at the back, so they can't really see him, other than the very well-tailored suit the Professor wears - no too-cool-for-school quirks in sight.

Professor Lecter introduces himself, and his voice is the first thing Will notices. It's a brief thought. Even with the accent, his words are projected well. He can't see what the man looks like, beyond his slighter taller than average height, almost rakish, with slicked-back shining hair.

After an hour, the lecture ends, Will and Alana are gathering their things. As they are at the back, they take their time, waiting for the other students to file out of the one door before they can leave. The Professor asked everyone to collect the course handbook from the pile on the desk before leaving, so there's a steady slow-moving queue.

Professor Lecter is standing by the pile of handbooks, smiling and saying goodbye to each student as they pass. By the time they get to the front, Will realises he's left his pen at his seat.

"Oh no, I've left my pen. Let me grab it," Will says. It's an expensive pen, a gift from his Father, he would hate to lose it, and he makes his way back up the stairs.

"I need to use the bathroom. I'll meet you out front," Alana shouts back at him.

"Ok, see you in a bit," Will waves at her.

He finds his pen under the seat. He picks it up and puts it back in his small pencil case and then in his bag. He makes his way back to the desk where the last few students are leaving and realises there are no handbooks left. The Professor is packing away his things.

He coughs and moves slowly towards him. "Sorry. I don't suppose you've got another handbook. There aren't any left."

The man turns around and faces Will. Only then does he recognise him as the man he asked where the lecture hall was earlier. *Great,* he thinks, *way to make a first impression; wet, bedraggled and unable to read a map.* He feels very awkward as deep brown eyes hit him with a scrutinising gaze. "Sorry," he repeats lamely, nerves making his voice crack.

The Professor looks him up and down before answering. "I don't have any more here. The office will have some."

"Okay, thanks," he looks down at the floor, suddenly unable to meet the Professor's gaze, his skin itches.

Professor Lecter smiles at Will briefly and then packs away his things. Will suddenly finds it hard to move.

"It's on the second floor, just to the right of the stairs, can't miss it," Professor Lecter says, still not looking at Will.

"Oh okay," Will mumbles and manages to find his feet again, turning around to leave.

"What's your name?" he asks, and Will turns back to see the Professor is looking at him again.

"Will, Will Graham." This time he makes a point of meeting those eyes. *I'm being ridiculous* , he thinks, *no reason to be nervous.*

"An aspiring opera singer, yes?" Professor Lecter says as his eyes bore into him.

He coughs again and manages to answer. "Yes."

"Have you decided on your final modules?" Professor Lecter says, leaning with one hand against the desk. It makes him look off-kilter. Will notices a dull gold wedding ring on his left hand.

"Mostly, trying to decide between Crawford and Chilton," Will says, hoping he's managing to sound slightly less nervous now, though he's still distracted by Professor Lecter's hands.

Professor Lecter smiles, and despite himself, Will's stomach flips. *This is not good* , he thinks . *Get it together* .

"Ahh yes, I'd go with Professor Crawford's course, he might be more straightforward, less flashy than Chilton, but he's infinitely more knowledgable," the Professor says this with a smile and a laugh that makes Will smile back before he even knows what he's doing.

Professor Lecter looks at Will for a few moments before finally clicking his expensive-looking leather briefcase shut.

"Thanks," Will manages, now completely distracted by Lecter's hands.

The professor picks up his briefcase and walks towards Will. "Well, good luck Will Graham, see you next week. If you need anything, my office is room 102."

"Thanks," Will says again, unable to meet his eyes as Professor Lecter leaves the room.

Alana appears a few moments later. "Hey, I grabbed you a course handbook," she offers it to him, and Will gingerly takes it.

"Oh great, thanks," he shakes his head and wakes himself out of his revelry.

Alana looks at him. He can feel the flush on his skin and knows he probably has a slightly faraway look in his eye.

"Are you okay?"

Will laughs and puts the handbook in his bag. Looking at Alana, he says, "yes, fine, so lunch?"

They find a table at a small café at the back of the student union, it isn't as busy as the other ones, mostly because it's more expensive than the others and the food is better. They both

order and settle down with the course list before them, re-reading their options.

"Professor Lecter said that Professor Crawford is better than Chilton, but he didn't sound particularly fond of either," Will says as the waitress brings them their food.

Alana looks at Will, confused. "When did he say that?"

"After you left," Will tries to sound nonchalant. He hopes it's working. "I had to ask him if he had any more handbooks. I didn't realise you'd grabbed one for me. He asked if I knew which modules I was taking."

"What did he say?"

"Just that Crawford was less flashy but more knowledgable."

Alana laughs "high praise."

"Yeah," Will responds vaguely as the memory of those hands floats in front of his mind.

"Well, let's go with Crawford then. Flashy is not always good, right? Better have someone reliable, and Crawford is the department head," Alana decides. "Plus, Chilton does the music therapy module, so let's mix it up and go with Crawford."

"Good plan," Will agrees.

They chat some more, and it turns out Alana's halls are on Will's way in, so they can meet and walk in together as they are now taking all the same classes. The conversation is easy, and Will feels like they have known each other for years. They both feel much more at ease about the year ahead now they can tackle it all together.

Will finds his thoughts keep wondering. He feels bad because Alana is lovely, but he's only listening to half of what she says. Professor Lecter's eyes and voice keep making their way into his head unbidden. He keeps thinking it doesn't matter, it's just a crush, and the man is clearly married and also a Professor, so he can look, but he definitely cannot touch.

"Are you sure you're alright?" Alana touches his hand to shake him out of his revelry.

"Sorry, yes, I guess I'm just a bit distracted."

"By Professor Lecter?" Alana laughs, "he is pretty hot."

Will laughs at his own obviousness. "Stupid, isn't it? He's a Professor and also married."

Alana quirks an eyebrow. "No, not married, widowed."

"Really?" Will sounds far more interested in this than he should be.

"I read up on all the Professors before choosing classes," Alana says. "He was an opera singer for years, and he met her while at Juilliard. They were together for a long time, and she died a few years ago. After that, he gave up music and went back to school to retrain as a psychologist, and now he teaches. He had his own practice for a while, but Crawford managed to lure him here."

Will takes in all this information and tries to ignore how it makes him feel. "How did she die? His wife, I mean."

"Not sure, illness, I think, but it didn't say."

He still wears the ring, Will thinks. "She was a musician too?"

"Cellist and she also composed," Alana answers.

"Where's he from?" Will had wondered at that accent.

"Lithuania, originally," Alana says and then thinks of something, "we should totally look up his operas and watch them! The library here has loads of old recordings. I bet we could find him. He was very successful."

Will knows that this is a bad idea and will only fuel the fire. "Maybe."

Alana smiles and gently elbows him. "We could make a night of it. I've got a tv in my dorm and a spare bed. After the first week, my roommate left the course, and they haven't found me a new one yet so that you can stay over."

Will thinks about it and then decides it might be good to spend time with Alana, and there is no harm in doing some research on their professor. Will is also training as a singer, so it's relevant, he supposes. "Let's do it. I'll bring some beers and snacks."

Alana smiles triumphantly. "Deal."

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Will auditions for the drama society with an obnoxious Freddie Lounds.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 2

Alana lives in one of the large on-campus residential housing blocks. It's close to campus and very popular. Will is in the larger, older halls further away and is jealous of Alana's nice housing. Alana was also supposed to have a roommate, but they left in the first week, and she's yet to be assigned a new one, so she has a spare bed in her room.

Will arrives at Alana's with a bag of beer, food and snacks. He feels strangely nervous, not about seeing Alana but watching Professor Lecter on screen. He shakes his head and tells himself to stop obsessing and that it doesn't matter if he has a crush, it's just a crush, harmless, and nothing he would ever act on. He presses the buzzer, and Alana's excitable voice rushes out of the speaker, and then the door beeps open, Will enters and starts up the stairs. Alana meets her halfway to help with bags.

"Hey, you brought loads. This is going to be great!" Alana beams at him. She's wearing pyjamas with sheep on them and an oversized university hoodie.

"Well, I thought we should get settled in for the long haul!" Will laughs and then, noticing the pyjama trousers, adds, "nice pj's! How many films did you end up getting?" Will had done a bit of research himself now, too. Lecter had been quite prolific, and his back catalogue is extensive. He hands Alana one of the bags, and they climb the remaining stairs to her dorm.

"There are three he wrote and performed with his wife that were filmed, he made others, but those weren't recorded." Alana opens the door to her room, and they both walk in. It's a nice size room, two sinks, two desks and cupboards and two single beds at either end. The half of the room that is Alana's is covered in posters of musicals and singers she likes. There are clothes, books, and CDs everywhere in the half of the room that is Alana's though it is all starting to spill onto the spare side. His room may be smaller, but it's much tidier.

"Do you wanna get comfy and put pj's on too?" Alana says. "I'm sure my stuff would fit you, you're so tiny!"

He tries not to react to her kind offer, taking a deep breath before shaking his head.

“No, I’m fine, thank you though.” Will is dressed comfortably in jeans and a plaid shirt, his usual uniform. He doesn’t want to give himself away. In his usual clothes, he can get away with looking like a beta man but anything else is just too risky.

Will looks at the musical posters and decides to change the subject.

“I take it you’re a musical fan?”

“Yeah, bit of a musical nut. I love musical therapy and want to pursue that, but I’d love to be a professional singer in an ideal world.”

“So, you dance as well?”

Alana is re-arranging the pillows on her bed so they can both be comfy, she has extra blankets too, all in bright colours, and she has to move the many bears from her bed to make room. “Oh yeah, sing and dance the full works since I was a kid.”

Will opens the beer passes Alana one. “Why didn’t you go to drama school instead of College?”

Alana smiles at her work. She’s created a comfy nest for them. “I’m not sure I have the talent to make it as a performer. This way, I have a vocation to fall back on.”

“Smart,” Will says and hands her a beer.

“Not just a pretty face!”

Will laughs. “Never doubted it.”

They both sit down in the nest Alana has made on her bed with an open bag of crisps and dip, drinking beer.

“What about you? Why here?” Alana asks.

Will smarts slightly, not ready to divulge too much about his past just yet. He doesn’t know this girl that well. *Best to keep it simple,* Will thinks so says, “same reasons, thought I needed a back-up, but I do want to be a singer, that’s the goal eventually, but, as you say, it’s nice to have a degree at the end if nothing else. I’m interested in writing, too, so this covers all the bases.”

“Are you joining the drama society? They’re holding auditions on Thursday. We should go together.”

Will smiles. “Yes, I saw. I was planning on it and would love the support!”

“Brilliant.” Alana smiles, “of course, you know who runs it?”

Will rolls his eyes, leans his head back on the wall and groans. “Of course, it’s him, isn’t it?”

“Yup! Oh, and we’re having a party here at the halls on the weekend. You should come.”

"Sounds good," Will clinks his beer against Alana's and smiles.

"Right, come on, which one do you want to start with? Shall we do it in chronological order?"

Will takes a deep breath, preparing himself. "Yes, that makes sense. "

Alana picks up one of the films "Ok, this is the first one, his wife is also in it so we can see what she was like."

"Brilliant." *Just to make me feel truly inadequate.*

Alana laughs again and puts on the movie, she turns the lights down, and they settle in on Alana's bed and watch the first film. Will is mesmerised by how much younger Lecter looks in the first film, his youthful beauty is breathtaking, and his onscreen presence is even more intense than in person. Listening to him sing is captivating. The camera moves over the orchestra as well. They can see his wife, beautiful with her cello and its melancholy song.

The film comes to an end, and Alana excitedly talks about how good it was, and Will agrees, but at the back of his mind, something has shifted, and he doesn't want to think about it. Alana puts the second one on, which is much darker. Lecter plays a nastier character, but still nuanced, making a wonderful villain. The man is also incredibly sexy, which Will tries to ignore.

"This is so making it worse, you know! How am I supposed to look him in the eye when I've seen this?!" Will says, downing more beer in frustration.

"Um yeah, it's not helping, is it?!" Alana laughs. "He is so hot!"

Will sighs and drinks more beer. Alana is getting sleepy but insists on putting on the last movie. She falls asleep within half an hour, and Will is relieved because this third one is overwhelming, Lecter's performance is stunning. Sitting in the dark and he's lost in the music and everything about it. He hopes Alana doesn't wake up as tears stream down Will's face. *I'm so screwed.* He thinks as the credits roll.

Thursday comes around, Will and Alana meet up outside the theatre for the auditions. Will's nervous, not just about auditioning but seeing Lecter again. After watching those films, the Professor has been in his dreams a lot lately. Alana is a wonderful distraction, though. As she whispers the low down on the rest of the people auditioning, Will wonders how she meets all these people. They all go inside and wait in the foyer until they are called in. Will is singing an aria he did last for his speech and drama course at school, 'Addio, del passato bei sogni ridenti' from La Traviata.

Alana is singing 'Castle on a cloud' from Les Miserables. The audition panel includes Professor Lecter as well as third-year students.

"Oh god, that's Freddie!" Alana whispers and tries and fails to point subtly. The girl she refers to is small, curly bright red hair, pretty, but definitely knows it, she is surrounded by a

group of girls wearing similar clothes. Will instantly dislikes her. "She's in my halls. She's so awful, honestly obsessed with herself. She is followed by that gaggle of wannabes wherever she goes. It's like she never left school," Alana says with barely disguised hatred.

Will meets Freddie's eyes which immediately look him up and down with barely contained disgust. Will looks away.

"I've seen her around," he says "She's in a few of our classes, right?"

Alana nods. "Yeah, so we'll be stuck with her. God, I hope she doesn't get in. She will, though. I'm sure she will just bat her eyelashes," Alana says and rolls her eyes.

Will laughs. "Probably. We will just have to avoid her as much as possible."

Alana gets called in, and Will wishes her luck. She won't need it. They practised their pieces in front of each other earlier in the week, and Will thinks Alana has a stunning voice. After Alana nervously enters the theatre, Freddie decides to come over and talk to Will.

"Hi, I'm Freddie," the girl says and sits down next to Will in the seat that Alana just left.

"I'm Will," he says and hopes he doesn't sound as guarded as he feels, he's aiming for civil, but he instantly dislikes this girl and the feeling of being assessed by her.

Freddie smiles the most superficial smile Will has ever seen and speaks in a slightly higher pitch than is necessary, as if used to having a captive audience.

"Yeah, I know, I know everyone. I think it's important to know the competition, right?!" Freddie says this with such false humour that Will finds it jarring.

"I suppose so…" *Please leave,* Will thinks.

"You're the only one on our course I haven't spoken to yet, so I thought I'd come over and introduce myself." Freddie looks at Will like he should be thanking her for coming over and talking to him. Will mostly just wants to never speak to this person again. He can see the gaggle of girls Freddie was with looking over at them and whispering. It makes Will want to be sick.

Will manages to contain the impulse to roll his eyes. "Well, it's good to meet you, Freddie."

Freddie doesn't take the hint and moves slightly closer to Will, invading his personal space. "What are you doing for your audition?"

"Addio, del passato bei sogni ridenti." Freddie looks confused, "La Traviata."

"Yes, I know," Freddie says with practised good nature. "You're a soprano?"

"Yes. What about you? Are you a soprano?"

"Yeah, but I've got range," Freddie says.

“I'm sure you’ll be great. I bet you’ve chosen to do something different that will stand you out from the crowd. Not ‘O Babbino Caro, I’m sure.”

Every young girl Freddie’s age does ‘o babbino caro’.

Freddie smarts slightly, and Will realises Freddie must be doing that aria.

“Well, not everyone is,” Freddie says with barely concealed venom.

“I hate to be rude, but I’d like to go through my piece in my head once more. I’m sure you understand,” Will stands up and walks away before Freddie can say anymore. Will can feel Freddie’s eyes on him as he walks away to find a quiet place to get his head together. He doesn’t need this energy right now. Will smiles as he hears Alana singing her heart out.

He closes his eyes and runs through the aria again in his head. He could do this in his sleep, but the nerves are definitely getting to him. *Breathe,* he thinks.

His name is called, and he passes Alana on the way out, who looks happy and wishes him luck.

Walking onto the stage, he looks around. It’s a nice theatre, good size, with comfortable modern seats. The students who run the society are at the production desk that sits over the seats. A small lamp is on in the corner. He doesn’t see Lecter immediately as the Professor is sitting behind them. Lecter looks bored but smiles yoobseeing Will, and he ignores his stomach flip.

“Will, right?” one of the older students says. An attractive young woman with long, thick brown hair and nice eyes.

“Yes, Will Graham,” he says, trying to find his confidence.

“Hi Will, I’m Margot. I run the society. This is Matthew and Bev; they’re my assistant directors this year, and” she points behind her “obviously, this is Prof Lecter if he’s still awake, but ignore him we all do.”

Will laughs and looks at Professor Lecter, who raises an eyebrow but does not otherwise react.

“Hi,” Will says.

“So, what are you doing for us today?” Margot says.

“Vedrò con mio diletto,” Will answers, feeling more relaxed as this Margot seems nice.

Bev smiles, a lovely looking girl with long dark hair and perfect skin. “Oh, thank god I could not hear ‘o babbino caro’ again!”

“Agreed,” Matthew says, a tall man with a serious look about him.

Will smiles. He likes them. “Glad to be different,” he says, feeling more comfortable, he can’t see Professor Lecter because of the lighting, but he can see the man hasn’t moved, and his eyes might even be closed.

“You are a soprano then? Anything else is in the wheelhouse?” Margot asks.

“I’m also venturing into writing and thinking about acting, but opera is where my heart lies.” Will feels more relaxed by the second.

“So primarily a soprano then?” Margot asks.

“Yes, but willing to be challenged,” Will sounds confident. It’s so good to be on the stage again.

“That’s a good answer,” Margot says and smiles. “Perfect, Will, well, whenever you’re ready, please go ahead.”

Will smiles. He closes his eyes, breathes in for a moment, and begins. The words are so familiar he loves this aria, and being up on the stage again, even in such a small context, makes him feel alive. He is lost in his performance. All thoughts of nerves go as he lets the language do the work.

He finishes, and they all clap, which makes him smile. He does a small bow. He notices that Professor Lecter has moved and is sitting leaning over the seat, watching him. He wonders if Lecter had been doing that the whole way through. He hadn’t noticed.

“Thank you so much, Will, that was brilliant. You even woke Lecter up,” Margot says, but Professor Lecter doesn’t react just keeps looking at Will.

“Thanks so much for seeing me,” Will is smiling and feeling good about his audition, and he gets a good vibe from the students, *not all Freddie’s, thank god.*

“No problem, you were great,” Matthew says, and Will feels good. He gets the impression Matthew Brown is not easily impressed.

“We will post the list up tomorrow in the theatre's foyer. It will be up from 10 am.” Margot says.

“Thanks,” Will breathes a sigh of relief and walks away. He can still feel eyes on him as he leaves the stage. Just before he opens the door, Will takes a deep breath in, letting himself relax. He hears Margot say, “that got your attention.” Will smiles and hopes that it was directed at Professor Lecter.

Chapter End Notes

Comments are every high note Will hits and kudos is Hannibal’s wide eyed attention.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Will goes to a party with Alana and receives an unexpected phone call.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 3

Will and Alana make their way to the theatre foyer. It's just after ten, so the list will be posted by now. They see a group of students gathering around the notice board, some shrieking with happiness and some looking upset.

"Yeah, it's up," Alana says nervously.

Will looks at her and cringes. They both make their way to the board, elbowing their way through the crowd to the list. It's alphabetical order. They see Alana's name first and hug. Will keeps looking further down, and he is too.

"I knew you'd make it," Will says happily.

"I knew you would, too," Alana grabs his arm as they leave the theatre to make their way to the next lecture. They bump into Margot, who beams at both of them, but mostly at Alana, Will notices and smiles.

"Hey, have you seen the list?" Margot asks.

"Yeah thank you!" Alana says, letting go of Will's arm.

"Of course, it was a no brainer with you two. Lecter was really impressed with you, Will, and he's never impressed. You too, Alana," Margot says and catches Alana's eye and they both blush. Will resists the temptation to roll his eyes and decides to keep that little nugget of information about Lecter to mull over later.

"Thank you," Alana says, looking away nervously.

"Are you coming to the party tonight?" Margot asks Alana.

"Yeah, we are," Will replies as Alana seems to have lost all ability to speak now.

"Brilliant. I'll see you there, yeah?" Margot says to Alana, who giggles and then blushes again.

“Yeah, yeah, see you there,” Alana manages.

“Okay, well, see ya’,” Margot smiles and walks away.

As soon as Margot is far enough away, Will elbows Alana and says, “she likes you.”

“No, no, she’s just being polite,” Alana grins, making Will roll his eyes this time.

“No, she wasn’t. It’s like I wasn’t even there, she likes you, and you like her. You are still blushing,” Will says and gently hits her arm.

Alana, still grinning, meets his eyes and says, “yeah, she’s lovely, isn’t she?”

Will smiles back. “She is. You should go for it at the party.”

“Please come early and help me get ready? Please? Can we get ready together? You can stay over,” Alana asks excitedly.

“Not if you get lucky, I won’t!” Will laughs.

Alana hits him and smiles. “One step at a time! Will you, though?”

“Yes, of course,” Will responds.

“Did you see Freddie was on the list?” Alana says as they start walking again.

“Yes, it seems we can’t escape her,” Will says and is reminded of her coming over at the auditions. “I didn’t tell you. She came over and talked to me after you went into the audition.”

“No, oh god, why?” Alana sounds scandalised.

Will grimaces at the memory. “Something about the fact that I was the only person on the course she hadn’t spoken to and wanting to know the competition.”

Alana rolls her eyes at that. “Like she can compete with you.”

Will laughs. “I think we’re very different.”

“You have more talent in your little finger than she does in her entire body!” Alana says with a conviction that makes Will smile.

Will laughs. “Well, I don’t think she needs talent, not with that face and body.”

Alana rolls her eyes. “She’s gross, but yeah, I guess she’s most people’s type.”

“Yeah, unfortunately,” Will says sadly.

They enter the music building and make their way up the stairs, and Will hears the high pitched fake laugh before he sees the person it belongs to. Both Alana and he look at each other and roll their eyes, knowing it's Freddie. As they round the corner, they see her

standing too close to Professor Lecter, her hand on his arm, throwing her head back and laughing at something he's just said. He's smiling at her. Will wants to throw up at the sight of it, his stomach twists oddly, and he recovers himself. *He can talk to whoever he likes. She's one of his students.* He still feels a twist of something, and it makes him uncomfortable.

Alana leans in and whispers, "ugh, she's so obvious."

Will nods in agreement. *I thought more of him…you don't know him, Will…stop it,* he thinks.

"He doesn't seem to mind," Will says before he can stop herself.

Alana takes his arm again and squeezes it. "He's just being polite. He has to be nice. Didn't you hear what Margot said about him being impressed with you? He snored his way through my audition, and I'm sure he did through hers too, but not yours."

"I guess." Will is a little comforted by that and smiles.

"Trust me, he's just being polite," Alana confirms.

Will shakes his head. "It doesn't matter anyway."

"I know. I'm just saying don't hold her against him."

"Yeah, true."

They have to walk past them to get to the lecture hall, Will takes a deep breath and holds onto Alana's arm for support. As they get closer, Freddie notices them and touches Lecter's arm again to make a point. Lecter notices them.

"Congratulations to both of you for making it into the society. I assume you've looked at the list?" Lecter says this to both of them but makes a point of meeting Will's eyes, and Will cannot help but look away.

"We just came from there. It should be great," Alana says, thankfully saving Will from having to speak for the moment. He's also grateful that she's not let go of his arm.

"It's a good group this year," Lecter says.

"Yeah, we are a good bunch," Freddie says, attempting to get the Professor's attention again.

"I would say it's a good mix," Alana says, somewhat pointedly, and Lecter laughs.

"Anyway, we should get going. We don't want to be late," Will says.

"You took my advice and went with Crawford?" Lecter says directly to Will. His tone is unreadable.

"Yeah, thanks."

"Don't thank me. You haven't had a class with him yet."

Will laughs, and Freddie lets rip another fake laugh before touching Lecter's arm again. Alana rolls her eyes.

"As you say, I should let you go. I don't want you to be late," the Professor says, managing to extricate himself from Freddie, who is still batting her eyelashes at him. Lecter walks past Will, leans in slightly, and says, "fantastic audition, heads above the rest." Before he can thank him Lecter leaves, and Will can feel the blush of pride on his face despite herself.

"Bye, Professor, see you soon," Freddie shouts after him, and Lecter raises a hand, waves and walks off.

Alana is beaming and squeezing Will's arm. Freddie looks like she could murder both of them. "Congratulations," Freddie says through gritted teeth.

"You too, Freddie," Will says, and they start walking to the lecture hall while Freddie stares daggers at his back.

"What did he say?" Alana excitedly whispers.

"Nothing, just that he liked my audition," Will has a warm feeling spreading through his stomach as much as he wants to ignore it.

"He likes you!" Alana whispers.

"I'm one of his students. He's just being polite."

"Or he was making a point of letting you know he's not impressed with Freddie but is with you."

"Don't be ridiculous," Will says as Alana smiles at him and raises an eyebrow. "Nothing would ever happen."

"I know, but it's fun to fantasise and did you see Freddie's face?! Classic!"

Will can't help but feel pride in that. "Yeah, I did. That was good!"

They both laugh.

Will gets to Alana's early for the party so they can get ready together, he's about to buzz the door, and Margot appears and opens it for him.

"Hey, you here for the party?" she says, holding the door for him.

“Alana wanted us to get ready together.”

She smiles at the mention of Alana’s name.

“Thanks again for choosing us. I can’t wait to get started. Do you know what we are doing this year?” Will asks.

“It’s announcing next week, but it’s a new piece. Lecter and I wrote it. I’m directing.”

“That’s exciting,” Will smiles. He has never worked on something new before.

Margot runs her hand through her hair as if a little embarrassed. “Yeah, he’s been very supportive. I know he can come across as uninterested, but he’s great once you get to know him.”

Will is hoping he’s coming across as uninterested and not as if he wants to know everything about the man now that it's obvious that Margot has a close relationship with Lecter. “Yeah, I haven’t spoken to him much.”

Margot looks confused. “Huh, the way he talked about you, I thought you had.”

“He talks about me?” Will can feel his heartbeat quicken in his chest, and he hopes that his voice didn’t come out as high as he thinks it did. Luckily Margot doesn’t seem to notice.

“Yeah, I mean, your name came up. He seems to like you. He doesn’t talk about other students that much, especially not first years. He’s a bit aloof that way,” she says and whispers, “I shouldn’t tell you, but we don’t normally cast first years in big parts, but he thinks you would be perfect for one of the supporting parts, and I agree.”

His heart is racing now. “Really? Wow, that’s amazing.”

Margot smiles. “Yeah, it’s not set in stone, but I like your chances.”

“Huh, I’ll keep my fingers crossed then,” Will says, aware he is now beaming at her.

“Don’t mention it to anyone? Especially Freddie, she’s been trying to get out of me what we are doing and who is being cast!”

Will decides to test the waters as Margot seems less than impressed with Freddie. “Why did you let her in?”

Margot laughs. “She’s not bad. To be honest, she needs direction, but yeah, she’s okay. Her dad is also an alumnus here and on the board, so you know, politics.”

Will nods. “That explains a lot!”

Margot laughs. “No comment on that one. Anyway, I’ll see you guys later. Say hey to Alana.”

Will smiles. “Yeah, will do.”

Margot leaves him, and he makes his way up to Alana's room and knocks on the door. "Alana, it's me."

"Oh hey, come in, it's open," Alana says, and Will makes his way in and is confronted with the entirety of Alana's wardrobe strewn across the bed and chairs. "I have no idea what to wear!"

Will laughs and puts his bag down. He makes his way to Alana and puts his arm around her shoulder. "Trust me, it won't matter, and you look good in anything. Margot let me in. She says hi."

Alana smiles widely. "What did she say?"

Will laughs. "Relax, she just said to say hi and blushed when I mentioned you. Seriously, you have nothing to worry about. She likes you."

"I am just out of practice with this. It's been a while," Alana says and looks so nervous it makes Will hug her.

"Don't worry. I'll be your wingman. Come on, let's see what you have."

They start to root through Alana's wardrobe and narrow it down to a few choices. Alana starts to try on choice number one while Will sits on the bed.

"What about you? " Alana says. "Relationship wise?"

Will bristles slightly and decides they need wine if they are going to have this conversation, he brought a bottle and some glasses this time with him, which he gets from his bag, opens and pours into them while Alana dismisses the first outfit, and Will sits back down on the bed.

"You mean who am I into? Guys or girls?" Will says, and Alana looks sheepish.

He likes Alana, but he's not sure he can tell her the truth about himself just yet.

"You don't have to talk about it," Alana says, and Will feels bad. She's just trying to get to know him. "I'm into both, so my last relationship was with a guy."

Will appreciates her opening up to him and figures it can't help to at least give her something of himself. "I've always been attracted to guys. I was, well, it's complicated, I changed, I think of myself as he or them, if you know what I mean."

"Oh, so you were…." Alana's voice trails off. "Sorry, it's none of my business."

"Let's just say it got complicated, but for now, I'm happy with who I am, and I'm glad that my relationship is behind me. My ex was very controlling. It wasn't good, a lot of mind games, he had a clear idea of what he wanted from me, and it's just not me." Francis had been his first love and an alpha. Will was too young to have gotten involved with an alpha at the time. All Francis wanted from him was for him to be a whimpering, lovesick omega. He trusted Francis with who he was, and Francis completely betrayed that trust. Presenting as an

omega had been hard enough. So many people judged you and treated you as if you had a disease rather than just a slight fluke of biology, let alone with Francis and his controlling alpha behaviour. Will had been lost for so long and was only just coming back to himself. He has a lot of regrets about that time and hopes that Uni can be the new slate he needs, away from his past and bad decisions.

“It ended badly?” Alana asks, her tone soft and gentle.

“Yeah, he cheated on me with a friend, got them pregnant actually,” Will had been devastated to lose two such important relationships in one fail swoop was heartbreaking.

Alana turns and looks at Will. “No way?”

Will takes another large sip of wine. “The baby is due soon.”

“Are they still together?”

Will sighs. “Not sure. He tried to get back with me the last time I saw him. He was a bit forceful. It wasn’t pretty. I told his partner, and she just said I was jealous. I think she is in denial.” The whole thing had been a mess and made Will feel like he wanted to run away and keep running.

Alana sits down next to Will and takes his hand. “God, Will, that’s horrible.”

Will smiles appreciating Alana being so lovely. “Not the best track record.”

Alana smiles and makes a decision. “We’ll find you someone nice, someone you can have a snog with tonight at least!”

Will laughs. “ I think I could do with a break from it all, to be honest.”

“What about Professor Lecter?”

Will laugh. “What about him? He’s a Professor, and the last thing I need is drama. I’ll admit he’s attractive, but that's obvious.”

“Well, I don’t have a great record either. My ex was a bit of a disaster too. We were just not suited.”

Will smiles. “I think Margot is going to change all that.”

“Do you think?” Alana says hopefully.

Will looks her in her eyes. “Yeah, Alana, there’s no doubt in my mind she likes you. The blushing from both of you is adorable.”

Alana stands up and smiles. “What do you think?”

Will looks at her, and she looks lovely. “I like it, it’s good to see your legs, you have good legs, and the top is a great colour on you. Margot is going to lose it for sure.”

Alana smiles. “Hair up or down?”

“Down, you’ve great hair.”

Once Alana is dressed, she undoes a few buttons of Will’s shirt and helps him style his hair, and they have managed to drink the entire bottle of wine Will bought. They make their way to the party and immediately see Margot. Will drags Alana over to her and then excuses himself and leaves them alone, lurking close by to eavesdrop.

“Do you want a drink?” Margot asks her.

“Yeah, that would be great. Thank you.”

“White wine, yeah?” she smiles.

“How did you know?”

“I pay attention.”

Will smiles and moves away, looking for other people he knows. He spots Matthew and Bev and goes over to them to thank them.

“Hey, Will you made it!” Bev says and hugs him.

Will is surprised at the hug but happy.

“Where is Alana?” Matthew asks. Will smiles and fondly thinks it hasn’t taken long for them to be seen as a pair.

“Talking to Margot, I left them to it,” Will says conspiratorially.

Matthew smiles. “Oh good, Margot’s so smitten it’s annoying. Glad she’s doing something about it.”

“Same with Alana. She changed her outfit twelve times!” Will says and laughs.

“So did Margot. She kept coming into ours and asking us what we thought and then ignoring us and changing!” Bev laughs.

“Bless them!” Matthew says and rolls her eyes.

“So you guys are in these halls too?” Will asks and wishes he was too.

“Yeah, we’re in the same dorm we’ve shared since the first year. We were going to move out to a house, but it’s too much fun here! Where are you?” Bev asks.

“Oh, I’m in Simons. I wish I was here, though,” Will says sadly.

“Well, Alana hasn’t been assigned a roommate yet. Maybe you could try and see if you could stay with her,” Matthew says hopefully.

“Yeah, maybe.” Will had been considering it, but Alana is very messy.

“Alana would love it.” Matthew says, “she hates being on her own.”

“I’ll have to ask her.” Will says, and then he hears his phone ring, “sorry, I thought I’d turned this off.”

Will fishes it out of his pocket, and he doesn’t recognise the number. “You okay?” Bev asks.

He disconnects the call and turns his phone to silent. It's from an unknown number. He cannot help but panic and think it might be Francis. *No, probably just a sales call,* he thinks. His paranoia never wants to be left behind for long. “Yeah, I just thought it was someone I don’t want to talk to right now.”

“Ok, you need a drink,” Bev says as she and Matthew take Will to the bar.

He can still feel his phone vibrating in his pocket as they make their way to the bar. He takes it out again and can see he’s already had several more missed calls from this number. Will excuses himself from Matthew and Bev and goes outside to answer it. Just in case it's something to do with his dad.

“Hello,” Will says, shivering a little in the cold and wishing he’d gone back up to Alana’s room to grab his coat.

“Will?”

He gets even colder at the sound of that voice, frozen to the spot, to be exact.

“Will?” the voice repeats.

His mouth is dry, and he can’t seem to move a muscle. He closes his eyes as tears press up against his eyelids. *No,* he thinks, *not here, not now. No, leave me alone.*

“Will, please say something,” the voice says.

Will takes the phone from his ear and disconnects the call. It immediately starts to ring again as the tears escape his eyes.

Chapter End Notes

Comments are how Margot knows what Alana likes to drink and kudos are how Will's eyes widen with jealousy at seeing Freddie and Professor Lecter together...

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Will is upset after the unexpected call from Francis. Who will comfort him in his hour of need…?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 4

Will sits on the steps outside the drama building staring at his phone. It's early on campus. He needed to go for a walk on his own. He'd left the party and walked home with his phone continuing to ring all the way back. Eventually, he'd cleared the missed calls, messaged Alana to tell her he'd gone home, and he'll catch up with her tomorrow and turned the thing off. He spent a sleepless night trying not to relive the nightmare of the past few months before he came here.

Now, there are twenty missed calls on his phone and a voicemail. He wants to cry. He wants to scream. He wants to throw the phone on the concrete floor. How did they get his new number? He doesn't want to know. He blocked the old number. He knows it'll be about the baby being born. It makes him shiver. He needs to delete the message. Block this new number. Maybe get another number himself. His eyes fill with tears, and he can't deal with this. He thought he'd escaped it.

"Will?"

Oh god. He'd know that voice anywhere, and he can feel a presence behind him. He wipes his eyes and looks up at Professor Lecter standing above him.

"Hey, Professor Lecter," he manages and stands up.

"Are you okay? You look upset?" Lecter places a hand on his arm, and it feels like it's burning through his clothes.

Will looks away. "Yeah, I'm fine, just some stuff from home."

"You don't look fine. You're shaking," Lecter says, and Will realises he is shaking and looks away, biting his lip to stop himself from crying. "Come on, come with me to my office. Let me make you some tea."

He nods and puts the phone back in his bag.

Professor Lecter guides Will into the building, which is thankfully empty, and they make their way to his office. Tears have started to fall down Will's face in earnest now. Lecter unlocks the door, takes Will's bag, places it on the floor, and gets him to sit down. "Here," the Professor says and passes Will some tissues.

"Thanks," he says lamely and dries his eyes. He looks out the window and tries to catch his breath while Lecter makes tea for them, eventually handing him a steaming mug of sweet-smelling tea. Will sits on the leather couch as Lecter moves the chair from behind the desk to sit opposite him. The office is small. There are books on all the shelves, some operas, some reference, all in different languages ranging from English to Spanish, French and Italian. On the walls are framed posters from operas and plays, some Lecter himself was in, some not.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Lecter says, his voice soothing Will.

Will laughs a bitter laugh, still looking out of the window. "I wouldn't know where to start!"

"At the beginning if you like. Or we can sit here, take your time," the Professor says and places a hand on Will's knee. He looks down at it and smiles. Lecter removes it and sits back in the chair, sipping his tea.

Will smiles and drinks his tea. He takes a deep breath.

"It's my ex, Francis. I met him when I was fourteen, he was seventeen, he was also an alpha," he looks at Lecter, but the man gives nothing away, no judgement. If anything, his eyes look kind. "I'm, well…." Will wants to trust this man, but he also knows from experience how people can be when they find out about him.

"You can trust me," Lecter says. "Anything you say to me will stay between us."

"Even if it's something that could potentially get me into trouble with the university?"

Lecter leans forward again and places his hand on Will's knee. "Whatever it is, I give you my word. I will not say anything to anyone."

"You don't know what you're promising," Will says. He hardly knows this man, and what if Professor Lecter gets in trouble for keeping this secret. He's already said too much.

"You need someone to talk to. Let that be me. I give you my word whatever it is, will not leave this room."

Will looks up at Lecter and can sense nothing but honesty behind those almost red eyes. Then he thinks of how he trusted before and then what happened. Francis almost destroyed him. Surely, he'd be mad to tell his Professor, a man he barely knows. Yet, there's something about Lecter that makes Will want to trust him. So he takes a deep breath and says, "I'm an omega." He looks at the Professor and only sees a slight widening of his eyes and nothing more. "It's not something I advertise. I didn't declare it when I applied. So, I'm hoping I can trust you."

“You can. I will not betray your confidence. So this Francis, was an alpha?”

Will nods and continues. “He swept me away from myself. I was young and naïve, couldn’t believe he liked me. I was starting to figure out who I was.” Will looks at the Professor, unsure, but Lecter just nods encouragingly so Will continues. “I was made to present as female by my father. He thought it would be easier for me. As I got older, I realised that I wasn’t a she or a he but something in between. I go by he or they now, I still have days where I feel more feminine. I guess its just the curse of the omega, always caught between tow genders.”

“Not a curse,” Lecter says. “You are just different, unusual, but it’s not a curse.”

Will smiles and appreciates the words. “Anyway, Francis was very manipulative. I didn’t realise it at the time, but he was. I lost my mum when I was young, I was living with my father, and I didn’t have a lot of friends. I started to realise, though, what he was. As I got older, he got more abusive towards me, pressuring me into things I wasn’t ready for. It was a crazy time. Every time I managed to get away, he would somehow find a way back in.

“Eventually, he left me. He got with a friend of mine and got them pregnant. Left me for them. It made me feel as if I was worthless, easily replaced. My friend was enamoured with him, completely under his spell, and I tried to warn them, but they didn’t listen. I think he’s very different with her, which makes me feel crazy. Anyway, I saw coming here as an escape, a new start. Which it has been. I’ve met some great people. I’m excited about being on the stage again too. Then last night, he called me, and this morning there are like twenty new missed calls on my phone, and he’s left a message. I know the baby was due around this time, so I know that’s what it’s about. I can’t. I don’t want to hear his voice or think about him. As soon as I manage to feel free, he senses it and contacts me.” His tears have stopped now but Will is angry that his ex still has a way of making him feel like this.

“You can’t help who you fall in love with. Love tends to haunt us. No matter how much we let go or run away, it finds its way back to us.” Lecter looks out of the window with a faraway look on his face. “It’s hard to escape your past.”

“You probably just think I’m a pathetic lovesick omega who can’t control themselves.”

“No, I most assuredly do not,” Lecter says looking back at Will, his eyes serious and Will feels his words hit him with conviction. “The fact that you are here, you have risen above the challenges you must have faced, means you are far stronger than most alphas I know. Far stronger than me.” Lecter pauses for a moment, as if deciding something before continuing. “So we are even, I’ll tell you a secret. I’m an alpha. You may have sensed it. Crawford bent the rules for me. No one in the department knows, so I’ll keep yours if you keep my secret.”

Will looks at Lecter and can see now why he was so drawn to him. That strength. Biology is always a magnet. It makes Will feel slightly better about feeling so connected to him. It’s a relief. He can blame it all on biology. Will looks at Lecter’s profile and sees the man in the films he watched with Alana is still there, just scarred and beaten up slightly. He wonders if he looks like that too. Right now, he feels it.

“Obsession is a dangerous thing,” the alpha says. “It looks a lot like love to some people and feels a lot the same.”

Will laughs slightly and sips his tea. It’s sweet and warm. He can feel it soothe him; he’s shaking less now. “I think that’s what it is. He’s obsessed. I’m a plaything, something he misses when he can’t have it and then doesn’t want when he can. Just some little omega he can throw away whenever he pleases.”

“Yet, you loved him anyway,” Lecter says and tears spring in Will’s eyes again, and he shakes his head to try and dispel them. “It’s okay to love even when we know we shouldn’t.”

“I don’t, not anymore.”

“You did, though, and that’s what haunts you, that’s what he uses over you, the memory that you let yourself, love, that you lost yourself to someone who didn’t deserve it, that you knew it and carried on anyway. It’s a lesson we all learn. You just learned it harder than most.”

He laughs at that. “Yeah, you can say that again.”

“Have you listened to the message?”

“No, I want to delete it.”

“You don’t want to chance hearing his voice.”

Will nods and bites back a few more tears. “I don’t know how he got my new number. Well, I do. He always finds a way.”

“What do you want to do?” Lecter leans back in his chair and sips his tea.

“I’ve no idea. I need to delete the message; I don’t know if I should listen to it.” Will looks out the window hoping to find a coherent thought because he can’t think through this fog in his mind right now.

“Do you want me to listen to it? Then I can see if you should, or I can tell you what he says.”

Will sighs. “I know what it will be. He’ll sound normal and fine, he’ll say nothing that gives him away, and you’ll think I’m mad.” Francis would always do this. The abuse would never be anything he could prove. Never leaving threatening messages or texts. It was always in person or implied in a way that only Will would know. Francis was clever that way.

Will feels the hand on his knee again. “I won’t think that. People like him are clever. I know that. They cover their tracks.”

Will looks down at the hand on his knee and then up at those eyes staring at him with comfort, and he wants to reach out. A tendril of something pulls at him, and he’s aware that Lecter feels it too. Will reminds himself it’s just biology.

“Yeah, okay,” Will says, and Lecter removes his hand from Will’s knee. Will can still feel it, though, a warmth burning through his skin, and he tries not to think about it. He leans over

and gets his phone which he had put back in his bag, and notices more missed calls and one more message, a text that says *Please listen to the voicemail. Call me back. That's all I ask.*
Will starts to shake.

Professor Lecter leans over and takes the mug of tea from him, placing it on the desk. The alpha takes his hand. "Will, let's just take this one step at a time, okay?"

Will breathes out a breath that got sucked into his lungs at the sight of the message and nods. Lecter gently takes the phone from him.

"What's the passcode?"

"Eight two five one seven," Will's voice is a cracked whisper, his eyes are unfocused, staring at the alpha's hand, which he gently lets go of, and the Professor types in the number, and the voicemail plays. Will can hear the voice, but his brain won't let him listen to it. After a few moments, Lecter disconnects the call without deleting the message.

"Will," Lecter's voice brings him back to himself, and he manages to meet the alpha's eyes.

"You're right. It's about the baby. Do you want me to tell you what he said?"

He nods and looks out of the window again.

"It was a beta girl. They've called her Molly." Will mulls over the name in his mouth like a stone. "She's fine. Reba was very ill during labour. They almost lost her, but she's stable now. He thought you'd want to know."

"She's okay now, Reba?" Will can hear his voice from very far away as this news sinks in. Reba was a friend. He still feels for her. He worries about her.

"He says she's stable. He says that's why he wanted to speak to you, to let you know in case you heard it from someone else and worried."

Of course, not the fact that you're using her near-death experience as a way to get to me, Will thinks.

"Did you want me to delete the message?" Lecter takes his hand again, and he looks at it covering his and wants to intertwine their fingers, but doesn't.

"No," he says and takes a deep breath, holding out his hand for the phone. "Let me listen."

"Okay," Lecter says and hands him the phone, his hand once again slipping from the alpha's, but Will grasps for it before he knows what he's doing, needing something to hold on to while he does this, or he'll slip away. Lecter smiles gently and takes hold of his hand. Their fingers intertwine, and he tries not to focus on how it feels. Will dials the voicemail and brings the phone to his ear with his free hand.

He closes his eyes as he listens and unconsciously squeezes the hand intertwined with his.

He deletes the message and drops the phone on the sofa when the message is done. He starts to cry again. he can't even feel the tears, but he knows they are there. With a slow and measured movement, so Will can register it, Lecter gently moves to sit next to him. He lets go of the alpha's hand as one of the alpha's arms snakes around his waist and up to his back. The alpha strokes his hair as he allows himself to be enveloped. Will can smell his aftershave, but also that comforting alpha scent. He closes his eyes and breathes it in through the haze of tears.

They stay like that until Will stops crying, and Lecter gently removes his arms from around him. The alpha takes one of Will's hands in his and then gently cups the side of his face with the other, gently wiping a tear away with his thumb. It's such a gentle touch that Will closes his eyes and takes in a deep breath, allowing that tendril of energy between them to grow slightly. He opens his eyes and meets the deep brown pool of his gaze, and he sighs.

"Sorry," Will whispers.

"For what?" the alpha's voice is low and quiet. It makes his accent more pronounced.

"Crying on you," Will smiles and laughs.

The Professor removes his hand from Will's face and reaches for the box of tissues which Will takes as that hand slips from his. Will tries not to think that he misses the alpha's touch, that he can still feel the warmth of the alpha's fingers on his face. He takes a tissue and dries his eyes thinking he must look like a mess. Lecter stands up, gets Will's mug of tea, and hands it to him.

"Drink this. You've nothing to apologise for. I'm glad I could help."

The alpha sits back down on the chair by his desk. "So what do you want to do? Are you going to call him?"

Will closes his eyes again and sighs before opening them slowly and sipping the tea, which has cooled now, but it's still sweet and grounds him. "No, I can't. I need to leave that world behind. Reba was my friend, and I feel bad that she's going through this, but what can I do realistically? What would she even want me to do? As far as she's concerned, I'm crazy. He's just using this as a way back in. I know that."

Lecter nods in agreement. "Yes, I think you're probably right."

"I'll need to block his number again," Will looks down at the phone on the sofa, and it starts ringing again. "Oh god."

"Reject the call and block the number," the alpha says firmly, and it helps stop the flow of emotion that was about to overwhelm Will. He does what Lecter says, rejects the call and then blocks the number. He breathes a sigh of relief. "Are you okay?" the alpha asks.

Will smiles and looks at the Professor. "Yeah, yeah, I will be." Will can feel that energy between them again, and he can't think about what it might mean right now. He gently

pushes it aside and tries not to remember the weight of the alpha's touch on his face, the feeling of their fingers intertwined.

After Will leaves his office, Hannibal watches the omega make his way down the corridor until they turn the corner, and he can't see Will anymore. He closes the door, locking it to pretend he wasn't in if any of his other students decided to come by. Sitting heavily on the sofa, leaning his head back, he closes his eyes and tries not to think about the first time he saw Will, dishevelled after being caught in the rain, just suddenly standing there in front of him, taking his breath from his lungs. He had thought then that Will was an omega. Then he spoke to him and, of course, heard him sing. Then it was clear.

He wasn't ready for this, he was nowhere near ready for this, and Will was a student. He can hear his wife's laugh in his head, mocking him. He can feel her as if she's here, climbing onto his lap, her hands in his hair, her smile so bright, the way she would cup his face in her hands and kiss down his cheekbones, eventually finding his lips and softly kissing him. He would wrap his arms around her, hands finding their way under her clothes to the smooth, warm skin of her back. The lithe weight of her on his lap was always the best feeling. She would laugh at him as he called her beautiful, *not as beautiful as you, my love. She* would reply and kiss him before he could respond.

He opens his eyes, and the image of her dissolves like smoke. He wants to cry, but he can still hear her voice again telling him to get a hold of himself. *When you want to cry, when I'm gone...* she had said as he climbed into her hospital bed, *think of my laugh, think of me saying these words, that you can't be sad, that you have to be happy because the world needs your beautiful smile, my love, the world cannot do without that, it can do without your tears, you look ugly when you cry!* They had both laughed at that. Even though he wanted to cry and cling to her through his tears, he had promised her. He had promised her always to smile.

Not ready yet, love, not ready. He thought and closed his eyes again, feeling her hands in his hair again.

The sound of her laugh again, *I never thought you'd be so taken with such a young thing, love. He is very pretty. Damaged, though, I suspect you like that.*

He smirks and shakes his head. It's not the damage that draws him to Will, it's something else, yes, his omega biology, that is intriguing, and in the depths of his mind, he imagines all the soft, wet places of Will he could lick and touch, but there is something else. A connection between them. A tendril of something. He dismisses a bond. He's too old. He's never been able to bond, he came close with her, with his Bedelia, but he never managed to get there.

Never , her voice says in a laugh. *Never with me, but never say never.* He can hear her, and he remembers her always saying he was capable. He just needed the right person. He'd always

assumed the trauma from his past made it impossible. *What have I told you, love?* Her lips gently kiss the top of his head. I'm *always right.*

He thinks about holding Will, the warmth of the omega pressed up against him. He can feel his wife's hand in his, squeezing.

Wait and see, love, wait and see.

Chapter End Notes

Comments are the smell of Hannibal's aftershave. Kudos are Will's far too pretty tears.

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Will has another encounter with Freddie...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 5

Will's mind is a whirlwind, and he keeps finding himself staring into space. Alana is also distracted by Margot but is worried about him. Will told her about the phone calls and the message, but he'd not mentioned that Lecter found him, and he went into his office and that… what? *What exactly was that? A concerned professor doing his job, nothing more…* It felt like more, though, he felt something when Lecter touched him, and he didn't want to think about what that might be. Most of the time, he can push it aside, his mind consumed with thoughts of his ex and the baby, Reba, and how his past always seems to follow him no matter where he goes.

At night when he can't sleep, staring at the ceiling, the faraway look on Lecter's eyes floats in front of him. His profile as the alpha had looked out the window. Will had seen the person Lecter used to be underneath the pain that still clearly haunts him. He'd wanted to take the pain away from him, how he'd understood it the moment he'd seen it. Grief marks you, and trauma leaves scars on the inside and out. He should know, and he could see it when he looked at the alpha. It made him want to keep looking to find what was underneath that scar tissue.

The alpha had invaded Will's thoughts, mingling with thoughts of his ex and his old life. The possibility of the new just under the surface and it terrified him.

Not wanting the first time he saw Lecter again to be his next lecture, he finds himself walking towards his office again with a plan to thank him. A quick 'thank you' and then leave to break the tension. Don't *think about the tension* . He takes a deep breath as he makes his way around the corridor, it was the Professor's office hours, and he half hoped that there would be other students outside and half hoped that there wouldn't be. As he rounds the corner, he can see the corridor is empty. He sighs again and walks towards the door. He takes a deep breath and knocks on the door. He can hear voices inside and dread hits his stomach. He would recognise that shrill laugh anywhere - *Freddie. This should help my crush if he's flirting with Freddie … was he flirting with me? Am I flirting with him? I should leave before he opens the door.*

Professor Lecter opens the door before Will can leave to reveal Freddie sitting on the sofa just as he had. The chair by his desk has been turned to face the sofa just as it had with him. Freddie has a mug of tea in her hands and a smug look.

"Sorry," Will says, taking in the scene and feeling like a complete fool.

"Will, hello." His voice sounds strange. Will looks up, and Lecter is smiling, seemingly pleased to see him and something else. *Embarrassed? Why would Lecter be embarrassed? What has he been doing with Freddie that he should feel embarrassed about? I'm such a fool,* Will thinks.

"I can see you're busy. I can come back," Will says and turns to leave.

Lecter reaches out and touches his arm. The alpha leans in slightly and says in a tone that sounds pleading, "please, just wait, for a moment?"

He looks at Lecter's face. *Yeah, he's pleading with me; he wants to be rescued* . Will smiles and tries to ignore the relief he feels.

"Yeah, sure, I'll wait," Will says and pretends not to notice the scowl on Freddie's face. Lecter smiles at him.

"Thank you," the alpha says, and Will sits down on the chairs outside his office. Lecter goes back inside his office but doesn't close the door. Will smirks at this.

He can't hear exactly what they're saying, just the low rumble of Lecter's accent and the high pitched note of Freddie's laugh, which makes him feel sick. Will can imagine Freddie's head thrown back as she laughs, probably touching Lecter's arm or knee. The idea angers him more than he wants to admit. He imagines how she talks to him, the flirtatious undertones. *She is pathetic* , Will thinks and then suddenly feels ill because really, what is he doing here? *Am I any different? What exactly do I expect to achieve from this? I should leave.* Somehow, he can't, though. He feels ridiculous. He leans his head back against the wall and closes his eyes, trying to banish all thoughts from his head. *I'll just thank him. There's no harm in thanking him . Yeah right.* He bangs his head gently against the wall, hoping he can knock some sense into himself.

After a few minutes and a few more shrill laughs that set Will's teeth on edge, the door opens, and Freddie walks out.

"Thank you so much, Professor. You're just so wonderful. I promise I won't let you down."

"No problem, Freddie, well, I'll see you on Thursday. Thank you for stopping by."

Will opens his eyes and turns his head, still leaning against the wall because he isn't sure he doesn't want to bang it a couple more times. He sees Freddie clutching a bundle of papers against her chest and has the smuggest smile on her face, Will almost groans but manages to contain it.

“Yes, see you Thursday, Professor,” Freddie says Lecter’s title in what Will imagines Freddie thinks is a seductive tone, but it just sounds dripping with desperation to Will’s ear. Will turns his head back to look at the ceiling. He wishes he could block his ears.

“Okay, Freddie,” Lecter says from inside the office.

Freddie walks by Will and stops opposite him. She stands and waits for Will to acknowledge her. Will realises Freddie is going nowhere until he says something.

“Hi Freddie,” Will says. Resigned to this interaction, he lowers his head and makes eye contact.

“Hi, I should probably say sorry. I think Margot may have led you astray,” Freddie says in a faux concerned tone that Will wants to be sick again.

Will looks at the bundle of papers, clearly a script, Freddie clutches to her chest as if her life depended on it. A hot spike of anger starts spreading in his stomach. “In what respect?” Will asks lightly.

“Oh, well, I should let Professor Lecter tell you. I’m not supposed to tell anyone. It’s only because Daddy is on the board that he mentioned it to me at the weekend, and I wanted to get a jump on it.”

Will suddenly feels very sick. “Oh,” he says.

“Sorry, I mean, I’m sure there’ll be something else for you. If not this year, then next year, for sure.”

“Yeah. Thanks, and, I guess, congratulations,” Will says, trying to be the bigger person, but he wants to slap her.

“Oh, thanks, Will, you’re such a sweetie.”

“Yeah, no problem.”

Freddie mercifully saunters off, deciding she has other people to lord it over. Will groans before leaning his head back against the wall again. *They gave her the part, the one that was meant for me. Great.*

“Will.”

That voice, how will I ever survive that voice?

He doesn’t move straight away, his eyes are closed, and he just needs a minute to regain his control as he mostly feels like he might hit something.

“Will,” Lecter repeats. Will opens his eyes and turns his head to look at the Professor, who has appeared at the door and is now giving him a strange look.

Oh please, Will thinks, *as if he doesn't know exactly what just happened.* He arches an eyebrow at him.

"Ah, Freddie told you. She wasn't supposed to," Lecter says while attempting to look sorry, Will doesn't buy it.

He groans before finally leaning forward and looking at Lecter. "It's fine as she says there'll be other parts. I mean, I haven't even seen the script, so I never had a chance to get attached," Will stands up and shoulders his bag thinking he needs to get out of here so he can go and get drunk, very drunk.

"Will, please come in. We can talk about it. The decision wasn't exactly mine."

"Oh, I am sure that 'Daddy' had something to do with it," Will says this more bitterly than he meant to.

"She's not that bad of a singer," Lecter says, and Will doesn't appreciate the alpha's attempt to be fair.

He scoffs and then feels bad for scoffing, but he just can't seem to care anymore, and all he wants to do is leave.

"I just came to say thank you for the other day."

Lecter moves closer to him. "You've nothing to thank me for."

Because he was doing his job, Will thinks and feels like he might just die right here, right now.

"Well, thank you anyway for helping me."

"Please, Will, come in," Lecter says, touching his arm again. He wants to run away, but his feet seem rooted to the spot. "Please, just for a minute."

He hangs his head and nods. Lecter smiles and moves out of the way so he can walk in first and closes the door behind them. Will is contemplating whether he wants to sit down, especially as he knows Freddie has just been sat on the same sofa. He can feel the alpha close behind him, though, too close. Lecter isn't moving to go around him, so they're both just standing there. *I need to move,* he thinks, *before this gets awkward.*

"Please sit down, Will," Lecter says, and he can feel the alpha's breath on the back of his neck, making him shiver slightly. Reluctantly, Will moves to the sofa and sits down, leaving his bag on his shoulder. He perches on the edge, not wanting to get too comfortable. He can see Freddie's lipstick mark on the mug she used on his desk and wants to roll his eyes.

Lecter hasn't moved from the door yet. The alpha is just watching him. Will can feel his gaze, but he can't look at him, and he knows he's being petty and ridiculous, and that part was never his, and he wasn't promised anything, yet he can't help but feel a small sting of betrayal despite himself.

“Would you like some tea?” Lecter says, still standing by the door as if blocking Will from trying to escape.

“No, I’m good. Look, all I wanted to say was thank you, and about the part-“he finally looks over at Lecter, who smiles weakly. “It’s fine, not your fault, it’s just not been the best week, and that was something I was kind of holding on to. Probably shouldn’t have.”

“Understandable, we’ve all done it,” Lecter says and finally moves to his desk and opens a drawer taking out a script and handing it to him. “Here, the least I can do is give you a copy.”

He smiles and takes it. “Not sure if this will make it better or worse.”

“Well, at least it gives you a heads up on what it is.”

“Which part is it?” *You wanted me to play, but now Freddie is,* he thinks but does not say. “That Freddie is playing?”

Lecter smirks slightly and sits down on the chair behind his desk. “It was the smaller soprano part. Her range is not as good as yours, so a few things will have to be altered.”

He nods and flips through the script, not paying attention to it, more as something to distract himself.

“So, how are you?” Lecter asks. “Or is that a ridiculous question?”

He laughs and feels slightly better until he looks at Lecter’s smile, and his stomach flips. “Yeah, it might be a ridiculous question.” He puts the script in his bag. “Mostly, I feel like I want a drink. Probably shouldn’t be telling my Professor that, though,” he says the word ‘Professor’ in a less-than-kind intimation of Freddie and Lecter smiles wider at that and then rolls his eyes.

“Well, I shouldn’t be telling you this but me too,” Lecter says and leans down to open the bottom drawer of his desk and takes out a bottle of whiskey. “If you keep my secret, I’ll keep yours?” Will cannot help but think, *aren’t they already doing that?*

Will laughs. “Yeah, sure. What’s one more secret between us?!”

Lecter smiles again, reaches for two clean glasses, pours them both a measure and hands him one. The alpha then moves Freddie’s mug to the other side of his desk, hiding it behind a pile of books which Will inwardly thanks him for. He brings the glass to his lips and takes a large sip. It’s smooth, much smoother than any whiskey Will has tasted before.

“It’s not the best, my apologies, but it takes the edge off,” Lecter swirls the whiskey around in the glass and then looks at Will. “So, how are you really?”

He looks at Lecter, and the alpha’s eyes are doing that kind-soft thing they do again, and he wants to scream. Instead, he downs the rest of the whiskey while Lecter watches with a raised eyebrow. “Great, just brilliant,” Will says bitterly. “My ex is a father, my ex-friend is in hospital, and the one thing that was cheering me up, apart from Margot and Alana being

adorable," Lecter smiles at that information, "was the idea of getting back on the stage again, and that's been taken away from me by the smuggest person I've ever met. I'm amazing."

Lecter laughs, and he does, too, Will throws caution to the wind, picks up the bottle and pours himself another shot. Lecter then downs the rest of his and pours himself another.

"How are you?" Will asks, his voice now a little slurred.

"Ahh, well, I've been forced to give a part from an opera I've co-written with one of the most talented students we have, a piece I care a lot about, which Margot has worked so hard on, to someone who is, let's say, less than qualified, because her 'Daddy' dearest insisted upon it. This mostly makes me feel like I've no creative control over my position and invalidates all the work that I and Margot and the rest of the students do to make the drama society respectable. I'm still wondering, if I'm honest, what on earth I'm doing here."

Will moves so he can clink his glass against Lecter's, and the alpha laughs before downing the rest in one go. Will follows, and they both laugh.

"What are you doing here? If you don't mind me asking? I mean, I know about.."

"My wife, yes, most people do." Lecter pours them another shot but doesn't drink it straight away. Instead, the alpha stares at the liquid swilling it around again. "She died, and I couldn't be in that world anymore. Everything reminded me of her. It wasn't the same. It was like I was living in a before-world as if my life was now two things - before and after. I needed to make the after be as different as I felt inside. So I went back to school, finished my PHD, something she always wanted me to do and found this job as far away as possible."

Will nodded, knowing about needing to run away, needing to find change. "Has it worked?"

The alpha looks sad for a moment. "In some ways, yes, in other ways, no. I still feel her around me, which hasn't changed, but there are days when I'm so busy that I manage not to remember or get lost."

"I watched some of the operas you did together. They were beautiful."

Lecter looks at him as if seeing something that isn't there, almost making Will turn around to ensure no one is standing behind the sofa.

"Yes, she was very talented. Me, well, I think I'm perhaps a better composer."

"I guess I'll know soon enough," Will jokes and Lecter smiles, a smile that makes Will unsteady and too hot. "Well, I think I'd better go. Thank you, though, for the other day, I mean it, and for the drink," he says and puts the glass down on the desk and stands up. He heads to the door.

"Will."

He turns and looks at him. The alpha looks melancholy, and he feels bad for leaving him.

"Yeah."

“Anytime you need someone to talk to, you know where I am,” Lecter says, and Will nods. “I’m sorry about the part. I am. If I had my way, you’d have been a shoo-in. This doesn’t mean there isn’t something else for you.”

He smiles. “I know, sorry for reacting like that. It’s just Freddie has this way of getting under my skin.”

“Yes, she is, shall we say, ‘an acquired taste.’”

“One you have acquired?” Will says this before his brain has a chance to stop him, *goddamn whiskey* .

“No, I most assuredly haven’t. Read the script. Let me know what you think?”

He smiles. “Of course.”

“Don’t tell Margot I think she’s talented. I have a reputation as grumpy and impossible to impress to keep up.”

“As you said, we’ll keep each other’s secrets.” *Stop flirting and leave,* he thinks.

Lecter raises his glass at him, and he smiles before opening the door and leaving. *Shit,* he thinks.

Chapter End Notes

comments are Hannibal's breath on the back of Will's neck and kudos are Will's blushes...

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Will gets drunk with Margot and Alana, they trash talk Freddie!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will knocks on Alana's door and is rewarded with a bright hello from within. He opens the door to find Alana sitting with Margot on her bed, smiling and laughing.

"Hi, Margot," Will says, slightly irritated to see her but lessened by the smile on Alana's face, of which she is most assuredly the cause. "I just saw Freddie."

"Oh," Margot says and looks sheepish.

"What, what is it?" Alana asks, looking at Will and then Margot.

"Look, I'm sorry it was out of our control. Her father holds the purse strings for the board, so we had to cast her. I wasn't lying when I said we wanted you, Lecter too. Have you seen him?" Margot gets off the bed and stands up, awkwardly running a hand through her hair.

"Will someone please tell me what is going on?" Alana says, still looking between them.

Will sighs and tells Alana, "Freddie has been cast in the play this year. I didn't mention it to you, but Margot had said that I was up for the part, that they wanted me. But Freddie and 'Daddy' had other ideas."

"Margot!" Alana says and stands up. "Why did you make a promise like that if you couldn't keep it?"

Alana takes a step toward Will with concern on her face.

“To be fair,’ Will says. “She didn't, she just said I was in the running, it’s just been a shit week, and this pretty much takes the cake. I’ve just come from Lecter’s office. That's where I ran into Freddie. She was her usual brand of smug about it.” Will is nauseated just thinking about it.

“Oh god, I’m so sorry, Will,” Margot says, earnestly. “Trust me when I say I would much rather it had gone to you. We don't usually even cast first years in bigger parts. At least she didn't get the lead! There are other parts. You will be cast in it, I promise.”

Will smiles. “Yeah, thank god for small mercies, I guess. It’s okay, Margot, Lecter explained, and he isn't happy about it either.”

Alana moves closer to Will and wraps him in a hug. “I can just imagine what she was like as well. Was she all over him too?”

Will hugs her back before she eventually lets him go. “Yeah, it was pretty sickening.”

“I’m so sorry, Will, you’ve really have had a shit week,” Alana says, hand still on Will’s arm.

Will smiles. “I was hoping that maybe you would be up for getting drunk with me. I’ve had a bit of a head start.”

“Ahh, he cracked open his stash for you? Brilliant,” Margot laughs, and Alana looks confused. “Lecter keeps whiskey in his office, many a late-night writing in there, and I’ve passed out on the sofa.”

Alana laughs. “Then yeah, we have some catching up to do!”

“Let me go and get changed, and we can all go out? If that's okay, Will? I totally understand if you don’t want me there.”

“No, the more, the merrier,” Will says. He likes Margot, and none of this is her fault.

“Brilliant, meet you back here in half an hour. Give you guys some time to gossip without me for a bit.”

“Make it an hour,” Alana says, and Margot laughs before kissing her on the cheek and then leaving.

Alana guides Will to her bed and sits him down. She opens her mini-fridge and gets a bottle of wine. Will laughs, and Alana pours the wine into two mugs and sits next to Will.

“Tell me everything,” Alana says.

“I went to Lecter’s office to thank him, I didn't tell you, but after I got those calls the other day, I was up on campus early as I wanted to clear my head, and he found me on the steps in a bit of a state,” Will says and drinks more wine.

“Lecter?” Alana asks, ears pricked up.

“He could see I was upset, so he took me to his office.” Alana raises her eyebrow. “Nothing happened, he made me tea, and we talked. He was very sweet. He helped me listen to the voicemail. I wanted to thank him. I didn't want the next time I saw him at his lecture.”

“Okay,” Alana says sceptically, and Will thinks he doesn't even sound convincing to himself.

“Well, anyway, I get there and knock on the door, and I hear Freddie laughing. She comes out holding Margot’s script and smugly tells me that she has the part that I was in the running for.”

“Oh, brilliant,” Alana says sarcastically. “I imagine she was the picture of modesty about it.”

“Well, once she managed to drag herself away from Lecter, don't even get me started on her calling him *Professor* in her best seductive voice.”

Alana rolls her eyes and drinks more wine. “Margot said she’s been all over him lately. Trust me. It is not reciprocated.”

“He made that clear. I just wanted to go after that, but he asked me in and apologised, and then we had a couple of shots together. Oh, and he gave me Margot’s script, which I’m not supposed to have.” Will remembers it in his bag, pulls it out, and hands it to Alana, who reverently holds it.

“She wouldn't let me read it. She says she’s still revising it. I get the feeling she’ll be revising it until opening night.”

“Lecter said she was one of the most talented students they have. Don't tell Margot. I promised I wouldn't tell her.”

Alana smiles. “Wow, that's high praise from Lecter. Margot knows that, though. I think they might be really close, she talks about him a lot. We should grill her tonight about how Lecter feels about you.”

“Alana, seriously, he’s just being nice,” Will says and thinks he needs to work on being convincing. “I’m his student. He was just being friendly.”

Alana rolls her eyes. “Sure, he was. Anyway, we have an hour until Margot comes back. Let's see how far we can get with this script!”

“Before we do, can I ask you something?”

“Of course, anything.”

“Feel free to say no, especially if you want the room to yourself with Margot and everything-“

Alana grabs his hand. “Yes, yes, please move in! Margot has her single room, so I can go to hers, and I don’t want a random person in here. I’d love it!”

“Are you sure, Alana? You can think about it?” Will hadn't meant to ask her, but going back to his single room in his halls where he hardly spent any time was too depressing.

“Yes! Margot knows the housing guy. We will get her to sort it out! You have half your stuff here anyway!” It was true he’d been staying at Alana’s more and more and leaving things here.

Will smiles, and Alana hugs him, almost spilling their wine.

“Thanks, Alana. Seriously I need some good news right now!”

Alana claps her hands with glee. “Come on, let's at least read the first scene, then you can change, and we can go out and grill Margot for all the gossip on Freddie and what is going on there and maybe some tidbits about Lecter!”

Will playfully hits her arm. “Yeah, maybe.”

They start at the hall's pub, and Margot buys them a round of drinks. Matthew and Bev see them and join. They both hug Will when they hear the news about Freddie, not happy either that she has been cast.

“She is such a virus. She has just wangled her way in, her and her fan club,” Matthew says bitterly.

“As Margot said, at least she didn't get the main part,” Alana says, and they all agree that they can take small comfort in that.

“Who is it going to be? Have you cast the rest of it yet?” Will asks.

“Provisionally yes,” Margot says. “We need to announce the play first. This has all gotten ahead of schedule!”

Bev laughs. “Well, it wouldn't be drama without drama, would it?” They all roll their eyes, Matthew goes for more shots, and Bev goes to help her carry them, leaving Margot, Alana and Will at the table.

“So,” Alana says, fixing Margot with her best stare. “What is the deal with Lecter and Will? Has he mentioned him?”

Will gently hits Alana’s arm. “Alana! Margot, don’t answer that.”

Margot cocks an eyebrow. “So you noticed?”

“Noticed?” Will repeats.

“How often he stares at you. The fact that you were the only audition he bothered to open his eyes through,” Margot says, laughing, and Alana beams at this information.

“Margot, seriously, he’s just being polite,” Will says, but he’s too drunk to hide the higher octave his voice has just gone up and the blush on his face.

Margot laughs. “While he is always polite, I can tell when he’s just being polite, you know? I can read between the lines now. He’s been through a lot, his wife and moving here. How shall I put it? He has been grumpy as fuck for the last two years I’ve been here. Lately though…”

“Lately, though, what?” Alana prompts her.

“Definite spring in his step. It’s a little disturbing,” Margot says and watches as Will blushes bright red.

“I knew it!” Alana says.

“It doesn't matter anyway. I’m his student,” Will says and is saved by Matthew and Bev coming back with drinks.

After many more drinks and some embarrassing dancing, they all walk back to the halls together. Bev, Matthew and Alana are singing loudly ahead of Margot and Will, laughing at them. Will feels so much better, surrounded by these new friends. He can see the light at the end of the tunnel. He just needs to stay on track.

“I’m really happy you are moving in with Alana,” Margot says and loops her arm in Will’s, who is appreciative of the support.

“Me too! Thanks for tonight as well. I feel a lot better,” Will says, and Margot smiles.

“I’m sorry about Freddie,” Margot says, and Will waves his hand drunkenly, and Margot laughs at him.

“Nope, no Freddie talk!” Will says, his voice very slurred and loud now.

“Sorry!”

“Can I tell you a secret?” Will whispers not as quietly as he wanted.

“Yes. Always,” Margot loudly whispers back.

“Lecter said you were one of the most talented students they have. He made me promise not to tell you.”

Margot laughs. “Yeah, right, he did.”

“He did! He gave me your script too.”

“Oh, god!”

“Alana and I read the first scene. I love it already. I wish I were playing the part I do, it's beautiful, and I can’t wait to read the rest.”

Margot smiles. “Well, thank you, and I won’t tell Lecter that you told me.”

“Thanks.”

There is a good-natured silence between them as they laugh at the three singing in front of them, they seem to have moved on to show tunes now, and Margot rolls her eyes.

“They always sing when they’re drunk, and now they have found another partner in crime,” Margot says good-naturedly.

“As have you!” Will grins.

“Yes, yes, I have.”

“I’m so happy for you guys, seriously. You give me hope.”

“Yeah, Alana mentioned you’d been having some trouble with an ex. She didn't go into details.”

Will waves her hand again. “No ex talk!”

“Fair enough.” Margot smiles. “What about Lecter, though?”

“What about him?”

“Do you like him?”

Will laughs at the question. “I’ve no idea! He’s kind. He helped me the other day when I was in a bad state, and yeah, I guess maybe I have the tiniest of crushes, but that's it. I’m way too messed up even to entertain the idea of romance, let alone with a Professor. It’s a bad idea.”

Margot nods. “Yeah, it probably is. I haven't seen him as happy as he’s been in the last while. I mean, still stoic and tortured, etcetera, but yeah, I think maybe a bit lighter. I’ve never seen him look the way he did at your audition. He was mesmerised.”

Will laughs. “Yeah, right.”

“He was! Look, I know it’s a bad idea, not what you need, and to be honest, I’m not sure he’s ready for anything either. He’s still very much grieving his wife, but I will say that maybe there’s a possibility of friendship. I think it would be good for him, maybe some flirtation?”

“Yeah, okay, that I can handle,” Will says and wonders if he can.

Chapter End Notes

comments always Will's blushes and kudos is the joyous drunken singing...

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Hannibal and Will get just a little bit closer ...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 7

The casting list is posted, the sting of losing a part has left Will, and he's enjoying spending time with Alana and Margot. It's so much better now they have moved into the same dorm. Will is at home for the first time in years. He tries to push his thoughts of Professor Lecter to the back of his mind, but he knows that the alpha is always in the shadows of his mind.

Looking at the list, he and Alana have small parts. He doesn't mind, just happy to share a stage with his best friend. The experience will be brilliant, and he won't let Freddie and her gloating ruin it.

They start rehearsals the following week. Will always feels like a bedraggled mess by the time he gets to the theatre in the evenings. Sitting in the back with Alana, they watch the main leads rehearse. They can see Freddie sitting too close to Professor Lecter. Alana keeps giving Freddie dirty looks, which makes Will smile.

"I really hope we don't get to her scene am not sure I could take it," Alana whispers.

"She's not that bad," Will says unconvincingly.

"Please, it's okay to hate her. She's an open target. After all, she brings it on herself."

"Am starting to think you hate her enough for both of us." Will laughs.

"Well, I caught her flirting with Margot earlier."

"What?"

"Yup, to be fair, Margot looked like a deer caught in headlights as she knows how I feel about her."

"Please tell me you didn't make Margot feel bad."

Alana smiles conspiratorially, and Will rolls his eyes. "What?" she says with a glint in her eye. "Now she has to make it up to me!"

“You are terrible.”

Eventually, they finish, and the theatre gods have been kind because they never get to Freddie’s scene. They all make their way to the pub, but Will realises he’s forgotten his glasses. He goes back to the theatre to get them, leaving everyone else to go to the pub. He walks into the theatre and goes to where he and Alana were sitting. He doesn’t even realise that anyone is there until Lecter speaks and makes him jump.

“Forget your glasses? Sorry didn’t mean to make you jump,” the Professor says and smiles, and then Will realises Lecter is holding out his glasses and leaning against the stage, smiling.

“Yeah, I’d forget my head if it wasn’t attached,” he says, but Lecter makes no move to come to him, so Will walks over to him. It’s quite a long walk from the back of the auditorium to the stage. The closer he gets, the more self-conscious he feels. Will eventually reaches Lecter and takes his glasses back. Their fingers brush slightly, and he prays he isn’t blushing.

“How are you doing?” Lecter asks.

“Good, no more calls from my ex. Getting back on the stage has been wonderful.”

“You seem to be settling in well. It’s nice to see,” Lecter says.

“Yeah, Alana has been great, and Margot.”

“You moved in with Alana?”

“Yeah, did Margot tell you?”

“Yes.”

Will wonders how much Lecter asks about him and shakes the thought away. It’s just a professional concern for a student and nothing more. Will realises they’re alone in the theatre and they haven’t been alone with each since that day in his office. This is different. He isn’t upset and has no reason to be here.

“Well, thanks for picking these up,” he says and instantly feels lame. How does Lecter have this effect on him? He takes a deep breath and looks up at Lecter, meets those brown eyes. *Bad idea,* he thinks. *Look away, look away now.*

“My pleasure.”

Does he imagine it, or does Lecter’s voice sound deeper?

“Well, I need to go. I’m meeting Alana and Margot,” he says and wills his eyes to look away and his feet to move. Neither of which seem to be happening.

They stay looking at each other, not saying anything until Lecter smiles and laughs, making his heart leap slightly, and he finds he can finally look away. Lecter reaches out his hand and touches Will’s hand. “If you need to talk, you know where I am, Will. Promise me you’ll find me if you need to.”

Will looks down at Lecter's hand, gently grazing his fingers lingering, warm and comforting, filled with so much promise he suddenly can't catch his breath.

"Promise me?" Lecter repeats, his voice low and close. Will can feel the alpha's breath, the softest whisper of a kiss on his skin. He shivers.

Will takes a deep breath and looks up at him. "I promise," he hears the words leave his mouth before the thought has fully materialised in his mind.

Lecter reaches up with his other hand and brushes a hair from Will's face, a lingering touch that almost makes him close his eyes, eyelids flickering, a moan close to escaping his lips. He doesn't want to leave. He wants to stay in this moment, he could live off being this close to the alpha for the rest of his days, and this realisation makes his legs shake.

The loaded silence settles between them, and it's almost too much. It's overwhelming, and part of him wants to run, but the other part can't seem to move his feet. "I should go," he hears himself say, voice breathless and quiet.

"Of course, you need to meet Alana," the alpha's voice is still low and verging on a whisper. They feel so close, millimetres and miles away. *God, his lips look so soft,* Will thinks before he can stop himself.

Lecter looks at him like no one has ever looked at him before, making his heart ache. *This is not happening,* he thinks. Just as he feels like he might come completely apart, Lecter lets go of his hand, and he realises where he is and who he is and, how this can never happen, how he is nowhere near ready for this. Will looks down and takes a deep breath.

"Okay, thanks again for my glasses," he says, and finally, his feet move, so he turns and walks away. As he does, he can feel a string between them stretching out. He gets about halfway down the aisle.

"Will?"

He stops, closes and opens his eyes, then turns her head to look at the alpha.

"Have a good evening, and don't forget I'm always here if you need me, as a friend."

"Yeah," he says, and those words *as a friend* sting more than they should. Will smiles and walks away, feeling Lecter's gaze on his back as he leaves.

He dreams about the alpha's touch, how soft his lips would feel against his skin that night. He imagines those deft hands skating his skin. The warmth of the alpha close to him, his soft-looking mouth, those eyes staring at him, truly seeing him, of hearing himself moan under his touch. His whole body vibrates at the thought of just kissing the alpha.

It's as if Lecter is invading him, haunting him.

Waking up, he's too hot. He stares at the ceiling and tries not to think about how bad this is, how this is the last thing he needs. How every time he closes his eyes, he sees Lecter.

It's late, and Hannibal is marking papers he's not had time to get to. He hears a knock and rolls his eyes, hoping whoever it is will just leave. He's in no mood to deal with Freddie again. Another knock and then, "it's me, Margot."

Hannibal smiles and opens the door. "Sorry, I was avoiding people."

"Anyone in particular?" Margot asks in a mock questioning tone as she knows the answer to that.

"Funny, come in quickly before she comes back."

Margot laughs and walks in. Hannibal closes and locks the door behind them. "I see you got started without me," Margot says as she notices the bottle of whiskey opened and the glass next to it.

"It's been one of those weeks," Hannibal says and gets another glass and pours Margot some whiskey. Margot takes it and sits down on the couch as Hannibal sits back at his desk chair.

Margot sips her whiskey and eyes, Hannibal over the top of her glass. She is always noticing. "You alright?" she says.

Hannibal cocks an eyebrow at her. "You know me all fine and dandy."

"Yes, I do know you, and I know that you are never 'fine and dandy', but you look even worse than normal right now."

"It's nothing," he says. He knows he looks tired. He hasn't been sleeping. Every time he closes his eyes, all he sees is Will. The omega is now haunting him as well as his wife.

"Hmm," Margot says. "Not convincing."

"I'm fine, seriously."

He is saved from further questioning by another knock on the door. "Professor?" A pause. "It's Will."

Margot looks at him silently, seemingly asking whether they are pretending they're not home.

Hannibal sighs, downs the rest of his whiskey, stands, and opens the door. Will is there looking nervous and shuffling his feet but then visibly relaxes on seeing Margot, who waves at him. Hannibal thinks the omega looks like a dream, a nymph, making him want to grab

Will and never let him go. Explore all those places of him, bring him pleasure, be complete. Alpha and omega. He can hear his wife laugh in his ear.

“Hey, sorry, I didn’t know you were busy. I can come back,” Will says.

“No, please come in,” Margot beams. “Maybe you can cheer him up! Join us!”

“Come in, let me get you a drink. I locked the door to avoid Freddie,” Hannibal says, and Will sits down next to Margot on the couch. Hannibal closes and locks the door, then gets Will a drink.

“So why are we drinking? Drowning sorrows or celebrating?” Will asks.

Hannibal laughs as he sits back down. “I think sorrows as I have a horrible feeling Margot is about to hit us all with re-writes.”

Margot rolls her eyes. “Not many, just a few.”

“In that case, cheers!” Will leans over and clinks Hannibal’s glass.

“Ganging up already. Brilliant,” Margot says and drinks more.

“Come on, hit me with it before I drink too much to read,” Hannibal says, and Will laughs.

They read through all of Margot’s changes, argue amongst each other, and get through most of the bottle of whiskey. Margot is stretched out on the couch, Will is sitting on the other chair by the desk, and Hannibal is still at his desk chair.

“Margot?” Hannibal says after finishing a long tirade about pacing. “Margot?”

Will laughs, and they both realise she’s fallen asleep. Will leans over, takes her now empty glass from her, and places it on the desk. “I think she’s gone.”

Hannibal laughs. “Lightweight.” He lifts the bottle. It’s almost finished. “You want to finish this together?”

Will smiles and downs the rest of his glass and then nods. Hannibal shares out the rest between them.

“Do you think any of us will remember what we have decided tomorrow?” Hannibal says.

“I’m not sure I can remember now!” Will says.

Hannibal tries not to get distracted by Will’s lips as the omega drinks.

“Good point,” he says and laughs. “Seriously, how do you think it's going?”

“Good, honestly, I think it’s going to be brilliant. You both beat yourselves up too much. How were the other productions you have done for the society?”

“I’ve only directed one before. When I first got here, I was assistant to the head of the department before they let me loose on the society on my own.”

“What about before?” Will asks.

“Before?”

“Before you came here?”

Hannibal shakes his head. “No, my wife, she directed. I always just sang or occasionally wrote.”

“So, how did the last show go?”

“Good, but it was a Puccini. This is the first time Jack has allowed a student-written play to be performed. A lot is riding on it.”

“It will be brilliant, I’m sure of it. You work so well together,” Will says, indicating the still sleeping Margot.

“Yeah, we do,’ Hannibal admits. He has been lucky with Margot. Few of her age have her talent. Perhaps except for the ethereal omega sitting opposite him. How he longs to hear that voice again. “She’s been a find. I’ll miss her when she graduates.”

“She won’t go far. Alana will still be here after all.”

Hannibal laughs and smiles fondly. “Of course, yes, I like them together. Nice to see her happy.”

“What about you? Are you happy?”

Hannibal smiles, but he can feel how worn it is on his lips. Happiness, he’s not sure he knows the concept well. Not until the possibility of Will arrived at his doorstep. He can see now the potential between them, burning and bright, glorious.

“In many ways, yes. And you, Will? How are you doing?”

“I like it here. I like working with Margot. This year is a good group too, Freddie withstanding.”

Hannibal laughs. “Yes, Freddie withstanding.”

“I mean, are you seeing anyone?”

Hannibal is surprised by this question from Will, but he can see the whiskey has gone to Will’s head, the blush on his cheeks a great indicator. He sighs and pauses before taking another drink. “No, you?” he asks.

Will looks down and smiles. “No, not ready.”

“I know the feeling,” Hannibal says softly.

“How old you?” Will asks, and Hannibal laughs, enjoying this emboldened Will.

“Why do you want to know?!”

“Just curious.”

“Very well kept secret.” Hannibal winks, and Will laughs.

Eventually, they run out of whiskey, and Will stands up to go, shaky on his feet. “Do you want me to walk you back?” Hannibal says, smirking, thinking how much trouble they could get into if he did.

“No, honestly, I’ll be fine. It’s not far.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes,” Will says and puts his coat back on and shoulders his bag. The omega makes it to the door, and Hannibal follows close behind him.

Will stops and turns around. “Thank you, though.”

“No problem.”

Hannibal takes the omega’s hand, and Will closes his eyes. Their hands are intertwined, and they are so close that Hannibal wants to lean in and whisper in Will’s ear. He’s taller than the omega, yet he feels as if the omega is the one invading him.

“Stop it,” Will says softly, almost like a moan, making Hannibal want to kiss him.

“Stop what?” he says, even though he knows exactly what Will means.

“This,” Will breathes out, and that pull between them is too much. He can see the moment Will gives in and lets out a small moan. “Professor.”

Hannibal wants to die. He knows he cannot survive this. He wants to kiss Will more than he has ever wanted to kiss anybody. He brushes his lips against Will’s tempting mouth, and they both shiver.

“It’s the whiskey,” Will says.

“It’s not,” he says and smiles, “I can’t stop thinking about you.”

“I know I can’t stop thinking about you either, but we can’t do this.”

Will’s lips feel far softer than they have any right to be against his, and their fingers intertwined are warm and solid. “I know, but I want to.”

“Margot is still here,” Will says.

Hannibal cannot help himself. The scent is too intoxicating. He begins nuzzling at Will's neck, brushing his lips against his skin. He wants to reach up and run his fingers through Will's hair. "I know, but I just can't seem to care."

He places the softest of chaste kisses on the curve of his neck, and Will moans. "Please."

"Please, what?"

"Oh god, stop, please before…."

Hannibal kisses Will's tempting neck once more before finally stepping back. He still holds Will's hand in his. "I'm sorry."

"It's okay. We had too much to drink," Will says.

He lets go of his hand and rubs his face. "I know. I'm sorry. I should not have done that. It was inappropriate and after everything you've been through, Will, please forgive me." He feels like a fool, letting his alpha pheromones take control. A part of him, though, knows he could make Will feel so much better. He could heal all those wounds if only he could draw more of those moans from the omega's lips.

"Honestly, it's fine. I'm going to go."

"Will."

"It's okay, honestly," Will smiles and leaves. He closes the door after him and bangs his head against it.

"Fuck," he says and doesn't notice Margot smiles in her feigned sleep.

Chapter End Notes

comments are Will's feigned pleas of no, and kudos are Hannibal's lips brushing against soft, forbidden places...

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Will and Professor Lecter agree to be just friends...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 8

Will is distracted every time he sees Professor Lecter. The first time after their almost kiss is the worst as Lecter's smile, and the slightly apologetic look makes Will's stomach flip, and it's all he can do just to smile and nod. His dreams get so much worse too. The feeling of Lecter's lips on his skin is haunting him now. Will knows the almost kiss was the result of whiskey combined with pheromones. He also knows Lecter is most likely not obsessing about this as much as he is. But then he'll catch the alpha's eye, who always smiles back and makes him question everything.

Will avoids being alone with the alpha as he doesn't trust himself. Lecter doesn't seem to be avoiding him, though. Instead, Lecter finds reasons to touch Will's arm or speak to him in a soft, soothing voice. It's the sweetest torture.

Rehearsals are the worst. Will can feel the Professor's eyes on him every time they rehearse Will's scene. He has seen Margot kick Lecter under the table at his obviousness, and Will thinks maybe she was awake that night in his office and is mortified.

Tonight he has gone to the pub with Margot and Alana, hoping for a distraction. Alana has left the table to get more drinks but has bumped into a friend. It's just Will and Margot at the table.

"So?" Margot says, looking at him over her beer glass.

"What?" Will can see she has a strange look on her face, and his stomach drops. "You were awake." Margot smile. "Oh god."

"I haven't said anything to Alana, and I won't."

"Did you speak to him? Lecter? Does he know you heard?"

"No, but he's asking after you more, especially as you've been avoiding him."

“I haven’t,” Will says even though he has and hates that Lecter has noticed. He had just about convinced himself that this was all pheromones and whiskey. There was no way Lecter was obsessing about him as much as he was about the alpha? Is there? Now, Margot is saying the alpha is asking about him, that Lecter noticed he was avoiding him. All the questions just open up again inside him.

“Yes, you have,” Margot says. “You haven’t been alone with him since.”

“Well yeah, I thought that was safest.”

Margot grins.

“Stop it,” Will says but can’t help but smile. “Nothing can happen.”

“Why not?”

Will gives her a sceptical look.

“Seriously though, why not?! Because he’s a Professor? No one cares about that as long as you’re discreet.”

Will wants to tell her it's not just that. Will is an omega and Lecter an alpha. People would think all sorts of things of them. That Lecter had taken advantage, that Will had seduced him with his omegan wiles. Or how disgusting they both were. He’s been through this before, and the fact that one of them is a professor adds to the complications. There would be no way either of them could keep their real genders a secret. Lecter would lose his job and reputation, and Will would look like a fool. “It would be a scandal, Margot, and you know it, and that’s not the only reason. He’s not over his wife.” Will knows this. He can see it in Lecter’s eyes, a sadness that still lingers. He has it, too, a wound from Francis that has not yet healed. “You know that anyone can see that, and I don’t want to be a rebound guy. I’m not ready for a relationship, especially one as complicated as this one would be. It’s just chemistry. It doesn’t mean anything. What happened that night was just whiskey.”

Now it is Margot’s turn to look incredulous. “Please, you know it wasn’t,” she says and laughs. “You two have been dancing around this all term. I’ve never seen him like this before. You make him happy, Will. That’s all I’m saying, and yeah, it’s complicated, but sometimes the best things are.”

Will sighs and wishes Alana would come back with more alcohol. “How do I know it wasn’t just the whiskey for him? I mean, I just…Margot, it’s such a mess.”

“I know it wasn’t because I saw him take your glasses that time in the theatre.”

Will’s heart flips. “What?”

“Yup,” Margot says and nods. “He took them and hoped you would come back for them.”

Will is confused now. What does this mean? Why would Lecter do this? “Has he told you anything?”

“No,” Margot says. “He never does, and he doesn’t have to! It’s written all over his face.”

“Margot!”

She leans forward and takes Will’s hand. “This is ridiculous,” she says. “You have two more years here. You need to be able to be alone with him.”

“Oh god,” Will says because he knows Margot is right.

“He’s in his office right now grading papers. Go and talk to him.”

“That is a really bad idea.”

“Why?” Margot says with her wonderful smile that he can see how Alana has fallen for her.

“Margot,” he says, using her name in protest.

“Will,” she says firmly.

“Margot.”

“I’m not going to give it up, Will. You need to talk to him. Go now.”

He finds himself outside Lecter’s office door, unable to decide whether to knock and wishing he’d waited for Alana to come back with those shots before leaving. He takes a deep breath and knocks. Nothing. He sighs and realises Lecter is probably avoiding people, so he knocks again.

“It’s me,” he says. “Will.”

He hears shuffling, and then the door unlocking. Lecter opens the door, standing there in a dressed down for him anyway, trousers and shirt with a red jumper over the top.

“Hi,” he says. “Can we talk?” The alpha smirks, and Will sighs. “Just talk.”

Lecter smiles and moves out of the way. Will takes a deep breath and goes in. Lecter closes the door behind them. “Please sit down. Whiskey? Or tea?”

“Tea,” Will says firmly and sits down.

Lecter nods and goes about making tea.

The alpha hands him a mug and sits at his desk, where Will can see essays spread out in organised piles. “Margot was awake,” Will says, and Lecter doesn’t react. “You knew?”

“Suspected. She has not been as subtle as she thinks.”

“Brilliant,” Will says and wishes his tea as whiskey. “Anyway, she told me I should talk to you. That we should talk.”

“Yes,” Lecter says. “She is probably right about that.”

Will takes a deep breath and looks up at the alpha’s warm gaze. “We need to be able to be alone in a room together.”

“We are right now.”

“Yes, but I think we need to lay some ground rules,” Will says, and Lecter raises his eyebrow and smirks. Will sighs. “Stop it, like that, for instance.”

“What?!” Lecter says, pretending to be innocent.

“Please, can we be serious?”

Lecter leans forward and places his arms on the desk, looking directly at Will. “Sorry, I know I’ve not handled this well, and I do want us to be friends. I want you to be able to talk to me. I hate that you feel you have to avoid me.”

Will is relieved. That's what he wants, to be friends, he tells himself. He can almost hear Margot laughing. “Exactly. Friends. We can be friends, right?”

“Yes,” Lecter says.

“Okay.”

“If we are being honest as friends, may I ask you something?” Lecter says, and Will nods. “Is the only reason you want to be friends, and just friends because I’m your Professor?”

Will thinks about lying, but he also wants them to talk. He wants to confide in Lecter and fort Lecter. This connection is too important.

“It’s also the dead wife?”

Will sighs. “No, not because you have a dead wife. That sounds heartless.”

Lecter looks down and then back at him again. “Sorry.”

Will sighs. “You are not over her, anyone can see that, and I am only just getting my life back. The last thing I need is a relationship as complicated as this would be. I am not ready to…” *fall in love,* he thinks and scares himself.

“I know that,” Lecter says, his voice soft and soothing. “I’m sorry for pressuring you. I guess it’s just been a while since I’ve flirted with anyone or felt a connection with anyone and it just felt good.”

Will feels the same way, and he doesn’t want to lose that. “I get that, and I like that you flirt with me. What happened the other night? I liked that too,” Will says, his voice quiet as he stares at his tea.

The alpha is smiling. Will can feel it.

“Will,” Lecter says, and Will looks up to that smile that makes his stomach do somersaults.

“Yeah,” he says.

“I liked it too. I like to flirt with you. But I can stop.”

“I kind of don’t want you to,” Will says, laughing.

“Good because I don’t want to either,” Lecter says, and Will knows they are on dangerous ground but denying this connection seems pointless. “It doesn’t have to mean anything.”

Will knows it does, though, even now, he can feel the connection between them. He doesn’t want to. He wished it wasn’t there, if only it were with anyone other than an alpha. He can’t go through all this again, not after Francis. “That could get complicated.”

“You don’t owe me anything, Will,” Lecter says, and Will is calmed by his voice and presence. He hates the way alphas can do that to him. “If you meet someone else, it doesn’t matter. You tell me if you want me to stop flirting with you.”

Will knows this is already out of control. He should just leave, yet he cannot even move his feet. “Okay.”

“Good,” Lecter says. “Now we have that settled, and we can agree I was a bit of an ass. How are you?”

He laughs. “You weren’t being an ass, okay, maybe a bit of an ass. I’m fine, thank you. How about you?”

“Snowed under with work and Margot’s neurosis but other than that, good.”

Will smiles. “I can leave you to it.”

“Please don’t,” Lecter says. “You are a welcome distraction.”

“Fine, I’m finishing my tea, and then I’m going,” he says to himself as much as Lecter.

The alpha grins, and he thinks he might die on this couch at its sight. *Pull it together* .

“I am sorry genuinely about the other night,” Lecter says. “But I also want you to know while it may have been the whiskey that lowered my inhibitions, it was not the whiskey that made me want to do it. I have wanted to kiss you from the first time we met.”

Will almost spits out his tea. “I thought we weren’t doing this.”

“I just wanted you to know.”

“The first day you met me, I looked like a drowned rat.”

“Trust me. It’s a look that suits you.”

“Thank you, I think.”

“I know that you are going to finish your tea and go, we are going to be friends, which is good, and that’s what I want. I want us to be friends. I will always be your friend no matter what happens. I will always be here if you need someone to talk to.”

“Thank you.”

“Of course.”

“It can work both ways, you know,” Will says. “If you want to talk to me, you can, about anything. I want to know more about you, more about your life.

“I’d like that too.”

“You can tell me about her, your wife. I want to know about her and your life if you want to tell me?” Will says but suddenly thinks maybe he has judged this wrong, and it’s nothing but chemistry. Has he stepped too far? Lecter is still his professor, after all.

“I want that too,” Lecter says, removing any doubt from Will. “I would like that. I want us to be more than chemistry Will.”

“Good. What was she like?” Will is intrigued. Ever since he saw her in those films, he watched with Alana. He has been fascinated.

“Bedelia?”

“Yeah. Tell me about her.”

He looks wistful. “She was my first love. We had one of those instant connections. I met her at drama school, and everyone loved her. She was just one of those people you can’t help but be drawn to. She knew it too!” He laughs. “She made me work for her, though. It was worth it.”

“She sounds amazing.”

“She was very wise, she always knew what to say, and god was she strong. She was so strong through the illness. All of it, she was amazing. I was a wreck. She was taking care of me in the end. She was my best friend. I miss that the most, her friendship.”

“I can understand that.”

“Not that we were perfect, we had spectacular rows. I miss those too, seeing her get so passionate.”

“You wound her up?” Will says because he can tell Lecter is the kind of person who would do that.

“Yes, I think I did. She looked so beautiful when she was angry!”

Will laughs. “She was beautiful. Alana and I watched some of your films.”

“Did you?” Lecter laughs, and he blushes.

“Research,” Will clarifies.

“Ahh, I see.”

“She was beautiful and talented.”

“She was much more so than me.”

“Well…” Will laughs. “It’s nice to hear you talk about her.”

“It’s nice to just talk to you.”

“Agreed.”

Will looks at him, and the alpha looks relaxed, making his heart happy. He wants to kiss him. Will shivers as he remembers those lips on his neck, strands of hair brushing his skin.

“I should go. You have work to do,” he says and finishes his tea and stands up.

“I guess so,” Lecter says and gets up. Will almost tells him to stay sitting but doesn’t. The alpha moves from behind the desk and takes a few steps closer.

“I thought we weren’t doing this,” Will says. He can hear how breathless his voice sounds.

“We haven’t actually done anything,” Lecter says softly.

“Exactly, we should keep it that way.”

“As you wish,” Lecter says, and Will laughs because the alpha doesn’t sound sincere. Lecter is then taking Will’s hand in his just like he has twice before. He loves the feeling of their hands intertwined, and Will knows he should stop him but somehow, he doesn’t.

“The talk we just had is pointless if you keep doing this,” Will says, looking down at their hands.

“Maybe I just want you to know it wasn’t the whiskey,” Lecter says and moves closer to him. One hand comes up to cup his face, and Will closes his eyes as he can practically feel Lecter’s lips on his, and it’s the sweetest torture. “I have kissed you so many times in my head. Maybe I just want to do it once for real,” Lecter says, and Will stifle a moan.

He opens his eyes and looks at the alpha’s eyes, deep brown pools, and knows this is a foregone conclusion. “Once.”

“Just once,” Lecter says and brushes his soft lips against Will’s. “Better make it a good one then,” Lecter says and presses his lips against Will’s as he sighs into the embrace. He brings one hand up to run through the alpha’s hair which is even silkier than he imagined. At first, it’s slow. Lecter’s arm snakes its way around his back, pulling him closer. The alpha deepens the kiss, and his tongue gently scrapes against his. Will feels that electric shock in his

stomach as he can hardly believe this is happening. Lecter's hand gently makes its way to the back of his neck, applying gentle pressure as they swallow each other moans.

Lecter breaks the kiss but continues nuzzling at his neck again and kissing the slight bump of his scent gland. Will moans and feels the shape of Lecter's smile against his skin. "We should stop this," he says but doesn't mean it.

"I know," Lecter says into his neck, then he feels the alpha lick his scent gland, and Will moans again. "We will, in a minute. I just want to taste your skin for a moment longer."

"Oh god," Will whimpers as he feels himself falling further for this alpha. "You should not be saying things like that."

"I can't help it. You inspire me," Lecter says and stops kissing Will's neck and looks up at him, and smiles.

"I need to go," Will whispers, and he takes a step back from the alpha. Lecter raises their joined hands to his lips and kisses them.

"Okay."

Will looks at him and feels like he's broken into a million pieces. The alpha looks soft, and he doesn't want to leave. "We are friends, again, once I go."

"Okay."

"Okay," Will says and manages to let go of Lecter's hand to reach for the door. "Bye," he says and unlocks the door and leaves. *I am so screwed,* Will thinks.

Chapter End Notes

comments are the press of Hannibal's lips against Will's scent gland and kudos are every one of Hannibal's soft strands of hair. *sighs*

Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Hannibal is finding Will more and more hard to resist... Not that Will minds!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 9

Hannibal watches the dress rehearsal while Bedelia sits behind him, laughing gently, as Will begins his scene. His voice is strong with energy that Hannibal cannot help but be drawn to. He sees so much talent in Will, potential. *It's there for the taking, my darling, it's right there…* He tries to ignore her, brush her presence away and concentrate on making notes. *You know you want him, you know you won't be able to resist, he wants you too, my love, how could he not?* He almost laughs at that but manages to refocus.

Hannibal has been careful in the past few weeks not to touch Will. They have spent time talking in his office, but he misses the omega. He wants the feeling of their bodies so close together. After this dress run, he wonders if he can find an excuse to talk to Will. Bedelia laughs again and frowns.

After waiting around until most people have gone, Hannibal finds Will in the dressing room of the theatre. Knocking gently on the door, he waits for a response. He hears Will's voice and opens the door.

"Is it alright if I come in?" he says and looks into the room, thankful that Will is the only one in there. He had seen Alana leave with Margot, and he believes everyone else has since decamped to the pub.

"Oh, hi, yes, of course," Will says and he cannot help but notice a slight blush on the omega's cheeks. "Please sit down."

Hannibal sits next to Will, ensuring a small but significant distance between them. "I just wanted to check on you. I…"

"Missed me?" Will says and smiles.

Hannibal laughs. "Yes, yes, actually I did," he admits.

"I missed you too," Will says.

“How are you?” Hannibal asks.

“Good, the run went well, don’t you think?”

“Yes, it did.”

“I can’t believe it’s opening night in a few days.”

“We have come a long way.”

“How are you?” Will says, concern glistening in his eyes. “You seem tired.”

“I have not been sleeping,” Hannibal admits. Images of Will haunt his dreams.

“I’m sorry, is it the production?”

Hannibal smiles. “Yes and no.”

“I’ve not been sleeping either,” Will says and looks away. “I dream…”

“I think, perhaps, we dream similar dreams.”

“Maybe,” Will says. “It’s complicated. Everything with us, I… I just wish biology wasn’t such an issue.”

“It doesn’t have to be,” Hannibal says.

“It’s hard to trust what is mine and what is the omega in me. Francis made it hard for me to know the difference. In fact, at first, I didn’t know there was a difference.”

“I hate to think that was your only experience of an alpha,” Hannibal says.

“He has made it hard to trust. I know you aren’t like him, but I can still feel my body reacting to you, wanting to trust you before deciding. It’s just that what Francis did, it screwed me over.”

Hannibal imagines breaking Francis’ neck. How anyone could mistreat this beautiful creature makes him enraged. “I would never do anything to hurt you, Will. Please know that.”

“I do, I promise, I do know that. With Francis, it started the same way. He was supportive. I thought he was helping me. I thought he knew best. When I had my first….” Will stops and looks away again. “This is what I mean. I feel like I can tell you anything.”

Hannibal reaches for Will’s hand. “You can, please go on. I want to know.”

Will looks down at their hands, and Hannibal watches him. “My first heat, he said he would help me but…he left me alone for a lot of it…denied me… he was cruel…he made me feel desperate… he said that I needed to learn to control myself and the feelings I had…he called me… It was horrible, and then when he eventually came to me…it wasn’t….it wasn’t what I had imagined or wanted.”

Hannibal feels each one of Will's words burn him. *Imagine this creature, desperate and dripping for you. You would never deny him.* He shakes his head to dispel her.

"It meant… well, I started taking suppressants too soon after that, and it's affected my hormones, so I'm not even sure I can have another one, which is probably fine as I am terrified of having one. The doctors I saw said I have PTSD because of it, which can also cause you to stop having them. The body and mind connection."

"Will, that's… I am so sorry. I should never have pressured you."

"No, with you, it's different. When I'm with you, it's… I'm comforted. You make me feel whole."

"I feel a similar way. I'm glad that you feel safe with me. Please know that you are safe with me, always," Hannibal says and squeezes Will's hand.

"Was you wife? Was she an omega? Do you mind me asking?"

"She was a beta but a very strong-willed woman. She was a singular presence. I often thought of her as an alpha. Her mother was an alpha."

"So, have you been with an…?" Will stops himself.

"An omega?"

"Have you met one before?"

Hannibal smiles. "Yes, I have met some before. There are more around than you think. I can usually sense them. I suspect you can also."

"Not always. I think that's something else Francis took."

"You can get it back, I am sure, in time."

"Do you?"

"Yes, even since I have known you, I have felt your omega presence strengthen. As your confidence grows, the rest will follow."

"You didn't answer the question," Will says, looking at him. "Have you ever been… close with an omega?"

He pauses and looks Will in the eyes. He wants Will to know that he will never lie to him. "Yes, I have."

"You married a beta, a woman, you are attracted to me, and I…I know attraction is not just one thing, and I feel the same way. It's not just alphas that I'm attracted to."

"For me, it's always the person. Yes, I find you physically attractive. Of course, you are very beautiful. My connection to you runs deeper than our compatible biology. My wife was also

very beautiful, but beauty can come in many forms. You intrigue me. From the moment I met you, I was drawn to you. I could sense potential in you, and I was attracted to that."

"Potential?"

"Yes, you are very talented. When I heard you sing, I knew you could go far, all the way, if you wanted. I want to help you get there. Whatever this is between us, whatever it might become or not become, I would never stand in the way of your future because I know you are going to be very successful."

The door opens, and Freddie appears. "Oh, Professor, I thought everyone had gone."

"Hi Freddie," Will says, and Hannibal can hear the disdain in his voice.

"Oh, Will, you're here as well. I hope I'm not interrupting anything," she says, and her eyes go to their hands still touching.

Hannibal removes his hand from Will and gives him a small smile. "No, Freddie, I was just giving Will some words of encouragement."

"Oh, well, yes," she says, but anyone can read she's annoyed.

"I was just leaving. Wonderful performance Will," he says pointedly, not saying anymore to Freddie as he leaves. He hears Will laugh and cannot help but smile.

Opening night finally comes around, and Margot is a nervous mess, Will tries to calm her down, but he feels it too. As he is trying to comfort Alana, who is nervous for both herself and Margot, he tries to ignore the furtive glances Lecter is giving him. About ten minutes before curtain-up, Will manages to hand Alana off to Margot and find a quiet corner to take a breath in before it all starts. He needs to shake off Alana's nervous energy. Will feels the alpha before he sees him. Lecter is close behind him in the dark corner of the theatre.

"Hi," Will says, his voice breathless as his eyes close.

"Hello, Will," Lecter says, and he can feel his breath on his neck.

Without even realising he's doing it, Will leans back into the alpha. He knows he shouldn't, but his body responds before he can stop himself. Relief and comfort are waiting for him as he presses himself against the strength of the alpha. Lecter's hand reaches up to sweep his hair from his neck and places a chaste kiss against his skin. His other arm slips around Will's waist and pulls him closer. He feels Lecter take a deep breath against his skin as if finally relieving an addiction.

"I missed you," Lecter says, brushing his lips against his skin.

"I haven't gone anywhere," Will says and smiles.

“I could sense you were nervous, and I wanted to make sure you were alright. I needed to,” Lecter admits. “I can stop if you want.”

“No, please don’t, I was nervous, and this is making me feel better.”

“I am glad,” Lecter says and presses another kiss to the curve of Will’s neck. “I will admit I missed the taste of your skin, the feeling of you so close to me. I craved you.”

“Stop saying things like that,” he wants to turn around and kiss him. He can feel his body just relaxing like it’s found a home.

“Sorry,” Lecter says, and Will laughs at the obvious insincerity.

“I missed you too,” he confesses. The dreams have gotten more intense now that he knows the taste of Lecter’s lips.

“Turn around,” Lecter says, and he closes his eyes and lets out a long breath because, god, he wants to turn around, but he’s not sure he can trust himself if he does.

“I can’t.”

“Yes, you can.” Lecter nuzzles at Will’s neck again. His hand goes up to his hair. “Please.”

“We need to stop this.”

“I want to kiss you.”

“We agreed.”

“We did. I still want to kiss you.”

Lecter laughs soft and breathless, and he feels like he might break apart at its sound. “I kind of hate you right now, oh god.”

“I’m sorry.”

“No, you’re not.”

“No, I’m not. I can’t help it. Please turn around.”

“Why?”

“So I can kiss you.”

“You’ve already kissed me. We agreed it was going to be once.”

“What if once wasn’t enough?” Lecter is gently licking Will’s neck now, and he can feel every stroke of his tongue, making him moan. “I still think about you all the time.”

“I know. I dream about you.” Will wants to move, to pull the alpha closer, to wrap himself in Lecter’s arms, to feel himself relax finally and truly in a way he only does in the alpha’s

presence. He wants to know what morning tastes like on his tongue. He wants to look into sleep drenched eyes and kiss each one in turn.

"Mmm, tell me about these dreams," Lecter says softly into the curve of Will's neck.

"Mmm, well, they always seem to start a lot like this."

"Then what happens?" The weight of the alpha's body against his makes him breathless, the brush of his lips against Will's skin is addictive, and if he could stay in this moment for eternity, he would.

"I am not sure I can tell you." If he lets his mind go there, he is not sure he could ever return.

"You can tell me anything. I want to know."

"I am sure you do," Will says. This feels like a dream right now. If he is, he never wants to wake up.

"What happens next?"

Will pictures herself turning around in Lecter's arms, pressing his lips against the alpha's. "I turn around, and you kiss me as you did in your office. My hands in your hair and you pulling me closer."

"Sounds good. Then what happens."

Will closes his eyes and relives the dream he had only last night, the feeling of his skin under Lecter's fingers and lips, the heat between them. He had woken up breathless, and sure he moaned in his sleep and was glad that Alana had stayed with Margot. "It's a bit of blur after that."

"Really? A good blur?"

"Yes, a good blur." He sighs and moans, and he thinks of falling and never recovering. "A very good blur."

"Turn around," Lecter says, and he almost does.

"Professor?" Will would know that high pitched voice anywhere and instinctively rolls his eyes. "Professor Lecter, are you in here?"

Lecter doesn't stop kissing his neck, and Will wants to push him off, but he realises that they are hidden at the moment, and if they move, they'll be seen, and the thrill of this is not lost on him.

"Professor?" *God, that voice is so awful* , Will thinks.

"Turn around," Lecter whispers and pulls him closer.

"No, shush, she'll hear."

There's more nuzzling and contented sighing, brushing of lips, and lingering breaths. Will thinks he should do something. He should probably *do something* .

"I don't care," Lecter says, and at this moment, Will, too, doesn't care about anything but the feeling of the alpha's lips brushing his skin.

"Yes, you do," Will whispers and finally turns around. Lecter traces Will's lips with his fingers and moans softly. "Go," Will says with a smile, and Lecter throws his head back in frustration and groans. The alpha lets him go, and Will smiles.

"Yes, Freddie," Lecter says, stepping out from behind the spare seats. Will covers his mouth and tries not to laugh.

"There you are. I have such horrible stage fright, and I wanted to see you." Will wants to throw up, and the sound of her voice, dripping in flirtation, is so obvious.

"Well, I was going to get everyone together quickly for a chat, so come on, let's go through. You will be fine."

Will can feel the wave of disappointment coming from Freddie at his words. He hears the door open and the sound of Lecter's footsteps and then a big sigh from Freddie, and she follows. Will stays where he is for a few minutes before leaving. Freddie sees him come through the same door and gives him a dirty look which he does his best to ignore. He also tries to ignore the smile Lecter gives him when witnessing this exchange.

At the interval, Will finds Alana, who actually does suffer from stage fright. He finds her outside of the stage door taking lots of deep breaths.

"Hey hun, you okay?" Will asks and puts a hand on her shoulder.

"Yeah, fresh air is helping."

"You will be brilliant, love," Will says, and Alana smiles.

"I'll be fine the moment I'm on. I just feel so nervous on opening nights."

"Perfectly normal."

"I just need my brain to stop thinking for a second. Can you distract me? Tell me something."

Will smiles. "Uh yeah, actually, I have something that will distract you."

Alana looks at Will, intrigued. "What?"

"Lecter tried to kiss me earlier, and Freddie almost caught us." Will had eventually told Alana everything that had happened partly to spare Margot having to keep it secret.

"What?"

“Yeah, I was taking a moment out back by the spare seats, and he found me. I didn’t kiss him, though. I wanted to, god, I wanted to, but I didn’t. Freddie comes out and is like, ‘oh, I have stage fright.’”

Alana rolls her eyes. “God. She is so obvious. He shouldn’t have done that, though, Will. I thought you had both agreed to be friends.”

“We had, we have. Just a momentary lapse. I didn’t kiss him.”

“You wanted to.”

“Well yeah, of course, but I didn’t.”

“Because Freddie interrupted you.”

Will looks away and bites his lip. “Maybe.”

Alana laughs. “You two have got it bad.”

“God, Alana, I know. I was like seconds away from kissing him.”

“Well, you know Margot, and I think it’s crazy, and you should go for it.”

“You also know it’s not that simple.”

“Maybe you should find him after, lead him into another dark corner and kiss him.”

Will laughs. “You are supposed to be talking me out of this, not encouraging me.”

“Oh screw that, you should kiss him and kiss him lots. He is so obviously in love with you, Will.”

“No, no, he is not. It’s just chemistry.” Will is quite taken aback by those words though he tries to act nonchalant about it. *In love,* he thinks.

“Please, his eyes find you whenever you are in the room. You have spent hours in his office talking. Margot says he talks about you all the time.”

“It’s not love,” Will says, wondering who he is trying to convince.

“Well, it’s something,” she says and touches Will’s arm. “You know, after everything you’ve been through, everything you’ve both been through, what’s wrong with being happy?”

“Alana, I wish it was that simple. I do.”

“It could be if you let it,” Alana says, and then Margot appears with a worried look on his face which instantly turns to relief when upon seeing Alana.

“Here you are! I was worried!” Margot says and kisses Alana. “Are you alright?”

Will smiles at how caring Margot is. “Fine,” Alana says. “Will was just distracting me.”

“Good, that’s good. Lecter was looking for you, Will.” Margot says, and Alana rolls her eyes.

“Go, Will,” Alana says and smiles.

Will goes to say something and then doesn’t. Instead, He just smiles back and goes inside.

“What was that about?” he hears Margot say.

“Nothing, just Lecter and Will almost kissing and being interrupted by Freddie.”

Margot laughs “god, he is so bad.”

Chapter End Notes

comments are Hannibal's lips as they brush against Will's neck and kudos are Will's contented moans...

Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Will noticed Lecter seemed distracted during the class and worried about him. He makes his way to the Professor's office with a strange feeling in his stomach. He knows he needs to talk to Lecter. Nothing else has happened since opening night. He wonders at what would have happened had they not been interrupted. He still dreams about Lecter and wonders if the Professor dreams of him too.

He knocks on the door, and Lecter shouts for him to enter. Professor Lecter sits at his desk. Will thinks Lecter looks tired. He closes the door behind him, and then, without really thinking about it, he locks it. Will turns.

“Are you alright?” he says as he makes his way to sit on the chair by the desk. Leaning forward, Lecter takes his hand.

“I have to go home.”

“Home?”

“Vilnius, Lithuania, home.”

Chapter Notes

Hi! I know it's been AN AGE! Here is another chapter of this beast I have sitting in my google docs, all sad and untouched!

I hope to get to more of it soon! it just needs a serious edit and sorting.

Anyways here is some almost smut for you... almost...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will noticed Lecter seemed distracted during the class and worried about him. He makes his way to the Professor's office with a strange feeling in his stomach. He knows he needs to talk to Lecter. Nothing else has happened since opening night. He wonders at what would have happened had they not been interrupted. He still dreams about Lecter and wonders if the Professor dreams of him too.

He knocks on the door, and Lecter shouts for him to enter. Professor Lecter sits at his desk. Will thinks Lecter looks tired. He closes the door behind him, and then, without really

thinking about it, he locks it. Will turns.

"Are you alright?" he says as he makes his way to sit on the chair by the desk. Leaning forward, Lecter takes his hand.

"I have to go home."

"Home?"

"Vilnius, Lithuania, home."

"Oh, why? Is everything okay?" He keeps his voice soft and low, but an intense feeling is coiling in his stomach.

"It's my Aunt. She's ill. My Aunt raised my sister and me from when we were young. She's like my mother."

"I'm sorry, will she be alright?"

Lecter looks down at his hands in Will's. "I don't know. My sister, Mischa, says the doctors don't know how long she has ."

"Oh god, I'm so sorry. When do you leave?"

"Tomorrow."

"For how long?"

"I don't know. I have taken the rest of the term off. They are also finding a replacement for next term, in case."

"I am so sorry. Is there anything I can do?"

The Professor looks up at him, the look on his face right now so open and pleading it makes Will ache. "Can you stay with me? Now, for a bit?"

"Of course." He says and squeezes his hand. "Tea or whiskey?" Will says, and Lecter laughs at the question.

"Tea, I think, maybe whiskey later."

Will smiles and stands up. This time he makes them tea as silence settles easily between them. He can feel Lecter relaxing in increments which he's glad about, and he tries not to let the thought of the Professor being away for the next few months grow in his mind.

"Here," Will says, handing him a mug of tea before sitting back on the chair with his mug.

"Thanks, Will. Sorry to do this to you."

"Hey, we are friends. I'm glad you told me. When did you hear about your Aunt?"

“My sister rang me this morning. Says she was asking for me.”

“You’ll feel better when you get there.”

“I know, I always dread going, and this, well, her being ill and hospitals, it just brings back too many memories.”

“That’s understandable. Will your sister be there? To meet you?”

“Yes.”

“Good. I wouldn’t want you to be on your own.”

“I’m going to miss you.”

“I’ll miss you too. You can always call me.”

“I’d like that.”

“Me too.” Will realises that he is going to miss Lecter more than he wants even to realise. The professor has become his world, he craves his presence, and the thought of not seeing him daily is terrifying. Will knew the holiday break would be difficult, but the thought of not being in the same country, of not seeing Lecter when the term starts again, is overwhelming.

“Me too,” Will repeats.

“Will,” Lecter says, his voice sounding weary and broken.

“God, don’t, please,” Will says, biting his lip. The last thing he wants to do is cry like a weak omega, the kind Francis always said he was. “Maybe we should have gone for the whiskey?!”

“Yeah, maybe.” Lecter laughs, but his eyes are glassy, and Will can’t help but reach across and touch his cheek with his hand.

“It’ll be alright. You can do this, you’re the strongest person I know.”

“Coming from you, that means a lot. I wish…”

Will knows what the rest of that sentence is going to be, that they could be together, that Will could go with him, that none of this was happening at all, that Lecter leaving wasn't going to be unbearable on both of them, “I know me too, but you need to go and do this. You will go, see your Aunt and your sister and spend time at home, and then come back to me, to us.”

Lecter closes his eyes and leans into his touch. “I will. I will come back.”

“I know. Okay, I’m breaking out the whiskey, tea is not cutting it.” He says and puts his mug down on his desk and removes his hand from Lecter’s face before standing up, opening the drawer with the whiskey in it and removing the bottle. Lecter places his mug on the desk and watches him. The Professor touches his face just as Will puts the bottle down and reaches

behind Lecter to get some clean mugs. Will stops and closes his eyes. The warmth of the alpha's hand on his skin is distracting. "This is not a good time to do this. You're upset."

"Worried you'll take advantage?" Lecter laughs "you won't."

"Yes, actually," Will says, looking down at him.

"Will."

"Don't." He says, but he doesn't move, even when Lecter's other hand reaches his hipbone, fingers gently grasping, pulling him closer. He closes his eyes, imagining giving in, climbing into his lap, and kissing him. "God, we can't do this."

"Why not?" Lecter whispers and gently pulls him closer. He loses his balance slightly, and his hands end up on the arms of the chair. Lecter still has one hand on Will's face, stroking his cheek. The hand on his hip is still gently grasping him.

Will opens his eyes. "You know why not." Though right now, Will's not even sure what the reasons are, he knows there are reasons, though, all the reasons in the world and that he should go.

"Do I?" Lecter says in a breathless, hot whisper. Looking into Lecter's eyes, he's lost and doesn't want to be found. The alpha's smile is something he dreams about, but seeing it right now, he realises he never remembers the true beauty of it. "Just kiss me," Lecter says as if it's the easiest thing in the world.

Will moans and knows that he's fooling himself. The moment he locked the door, this would happen. Will has been craving the Professor and his touch for weeks, and the thought of not seeing him only worsens it.

"Just once," Will says, and Lecter smiles.

"Just once," Lecter repeats.

Will leans in closer, and Lecter moves the hand on the side of Will's face through his hair. Then he feels the weight of Lecter's palm pressed against the nape of his neck. The hand on his hip slips around his lower back and pulls him in. Will is still bracing himself on the arms of the chair.

"Better make it a good one," Lecter says, smiling before pressing his lips softly against Will. The alpha manoeuvres him, so Will is finally sitting in his lap. His hands end up in Lecter's hair which he loves to ruffle and muss. Silky strands thread through her fingers. The alpha's hands are stroking up and down his back as he moans into the kiss.

Lecter's fingertips search under his t-shirt, and Will moans when they find his bare skin, hands scraping up his back, the heat between them building. Will thinks they should stop. He really should stop this. He has already lost control of this situation if he ever had it. But the feeling of Lecter's hands on his bare skin finally after all this time makes him gasp, and he

thinks, just one more moment, one more moment, then I'll stop. I just want to remember. I just want to live in this moment with his hands warm and strong on me.

Being on his lap, he can feel Lecter solid beneath him, and he cannot help but move his hips suggestively as he ruffles Lecter's always-perfect hair. The alpha's hands roaming on his back are better than his dreams these past few months. The taste of him as the kiss between them deepens, slow and tender and then more passionate, and Will realises he will have to live without Lecter for god knows how long. He wants to keep this moment forever suspended in time. He wants to only breathe with Lecter's lips on his and Lecter's hands touching his skin. He knows he needs to stop this, but he just wants one moment longer, one moment longer to feel this, to be here, so he can always remember.

They break the kiss between them, and Will closes his eyes in frustration. "I wish I didn't feel this way," he whispers, a crack in his voice.

Lecter strokes a hand down Will's back as their foreheads touch. "I don't want to go. I don't want to leave you."

"I will miss you."

"I want you to know, Will, that I'm falling for you."

Will closes his eyes again as tears form behind his eyes because as much as he wants to blame this on lust, on chemistry alone, he has known for a long time it's more, that it has the potential to be so much more. "Don't say it" he places a finger on Lecter's kiss-swollen lips, and heat radiates from them. "Not now, not when you're leaving. Just kiss me."

In response, Lecter slides his hand to the back of Will's neck and pulls him closer, and their lips meet in a slow kiss filled with so much longing it aches and beats between them.

"Will", a breathless whisper laced with desire making him shiver. He doesn't answer. He just kisses Lecter again on his lips and then along his jawline, down the side of his neck, and the alpha arches his back for him, and he moans. Lecter's hands find their way down his back and rest gently on his hips, grasping at him with urgency.

"I just want to taste your skin, please," Lecter almost growls, and Will feels these words as they leave the alpha's lips and wills them into his skin to take with him.

"Please," he whines, not sure of what he's even asking for except an extension to this moment, just a little more of this feeling as much as he knows it's going to make having to leave this room, this chair, a wrench so painful it will feel like blood has been spilt he cannot stop himself, the feeling of the alpha's skin under his lips is an addiction that he knows will seep into his dreams and torture him every night, but right now he just doesn't care.

Nothing is between them but breath, lips, touch, and gasps. Lecter grips Will's hips harder and moves him standing in one swift movement so he's sat on the edge of the desk, his body between Lecter's legs. The alpha kisses him again. Will's hands find their way under the professor's jacket and untuck his shirt to run his hands underneath, finally feeling those

muscles he has fantasised about. He has watched move under clothes for the past few months. The alpha is solid, warm and perfect under his fingertips.

Lecter kisses down Will's neck, placing small bites. His hand moves his t-shirt aside to reach more skin as he arches his head back, and he knows the full growl which leaves the alpha's lips will reverberate in his mind forever. Will knows he should stop, but instead, he wraps his legs around Lecter's waist and drags his fingernails gently down the alpha's back. He just needs more. He needs so much more. He needs to stay in this moment and have this moment to return to.

Eventually, the alpha comes to his senses and breaks away. Lecter smiles and strokes a hand down Will's face, and he covers it with his own and returns a gentle smile. He knows what the alpha thinks, and Lecter's right. They can't do this here. "I'm sorry," Lecter says, and Will shushes him with his finger.

"It's okay. I know we can't do this, not like this. I need to go, and you need to organise everything so you're ready to go tomorrow." Lecter throws his head back in frustration. "Don't," Will says. "Please, it's fine. Everything will be alright, somehow." Even though Will feels as distraught as the alpha does right now, there is a part of him that does know deep down that they will be alright and that they will somehow find their way back to each other.

Lecter is still not looking at him, so Will reaches up and places his hand at the back of his neck, pulling him closer.

"Alpha, Hannibal," he whispers his name like a prayer, the first time he has said it, the first time he hasn't called him Lecter or Professor. The word alpha hangs between them, promising so much, promising things which Will is terrified he'll never be able to give. "I promise you it will be alright." Will chastely kisses Hannibal's lips, then places his hand on the alpha's chest and gently pushes him back so he can stand.

Righting his clothes and taking a deep breath, Will reaches up and cups Hannibal's face and smiles. "Remember to breathe, okay?"

Hannibal smiles and nods. Will gathers up his bag and puts on his coat.

"Call me before you go. Tonight?" Will says.

"Yes, of course."

Will kisses him again, and Hannibal's hands linger on his hips before they part, foreheads touching.

"I liked you calling me Hannibal, and alpha. I know it's hard for you, but it felt….'

"Good, I know," Will says because it did, it felt right.

Will smiles, unlocks the door and slips out, tears starting to fall his face.

He walks home on autopilot with the lingering taste and feeling of Hannibal on his lips. That name, Hannibal, that term, alpha, seems to be repeating in his mind over and over. Will never thought he'd use that word again, never thought he'd feel like this again. His skin is still buzzing. Arriving back at the dorm in a haze, he sits on his bed. He stares into space as he tries to get his brain to think a single thought that isn't the memory of hands on his back, tongue scraping against his, the soft strands of hair as they fell between his fingers like silk, the look in Hannibal's eyes when he said those words to him, the sound of his voice. He knows he's in love, maybe even something more he cannot begin to think about. Yet he can't deny it for a moment longer, and he has no idea how he will live without him.

Alana appears, takes one look at Will, sits on the bed next to him, and wraps an arm around him, and that's when the damn breaks and the tears flow. Will cries until he can cry no more. He is so overwhelmed by his feelings they seem to have crashed down on him, something has been opened up between them, and he cannot close it.

"What's happened?" Alana says, her voice soft as she strokes Will's hair.

Will takes a deep breath through his tears "he's leaving."

"Lecter?"

Will nods.

"For how long?" Alana asks, her voice soft and comforting as she starts to piece together what has happened.

"He doesn't know. His Aunt is ill, the woman who raised him."

"He is going back to Vilnius?"

"He has to."

"You spoke to him? What happened, Will?" Will sits up and looks at Alana through her tears. "I love him, Alana, I didn't mean for it to happen, and I have been denying it, but I am in love with him."

"Oh, Will."

"I know, I know, he's leaving. Even if he wasn't, nothing has changed. He is still my professor, and he is still so broken."

"He loves you too?"

"I think maybe. Yes." He knows Hannibal does, but admitting that to himself fully might break him right now.

"Oh, Will, I'm so sorry you're going through this."

"How did this happen?"

“You can’t help who you fall for.”

“Alana, we kissed. I can’t believe I kissed him. It’s made it so much worse. He’s leaving for god knows how long, and I have no idea what I am going to do.”

“When is he going?”

“Tomorrow.” Will says and starts to cry again, and Alana hugs him until he passes out from exhaustion.

Will wakes up to his phone vibrating, and he blearily reaches for it in the dark. Sitting up, he can see in the dim light that Alana is not in the room, probably gone to tell Margot about Lecter. He looks at the number on his phone even though he knows it’s him, it’s late, but he doesn’t hesitate before he answers.

“Hi,” he says as he leans back against the headboard of his bed, the darkness is a comfort. He imagines the alpha lying next to him.

“Sorry to call so late. Are you alright?” Hannibal says, and already the alpha sounds far away.

“That’s okay. I’m alright. How are you?” Will says, even though he already feels like he has been torn in two, and he realises he must have cried himself to sleep, and Alana put him to bed. “I miss you already.”

Hannibal sighs. “I know, I would say I’m sorry about earlier, but I’m not.”

“I’m not either.”

“You sure?”

“Making out with my hot professor in his office? No, definitely not.” Will laughs, and after a pause, Hannibal laughs too, and some of the tension leaves.

“Glad he was hot, at least.”

“Very and a very good kisser.”

“I’m sure you gave as good as you got.”

He laughs. “Have you left yet?”

“No, the taxi is coming in an hour.”

“It’s going to be so strange not seeing you every day.”

“I know.”

“What time is your flight?”

“Ten thirty.”

Will can hear Hannibal’s breathing as he turns on his side and cradles the phone close to his ear. He closes his eyes, and even in the darkness, he puts his hand out as if it would reach him as if he was led next to Hannibal, his eyes looking into his.

“Call me when you get settled there, okay? As soon as you get a chance?”

“Of course.”

“Promise me something?”

“Anything.”

“No matter what happens between us that we will always be friends. That you will always talk to me,” Will needs this reassurance because, physical attraction aside he wants Hannibal’s friendship. He needs him in his life.

“That’s an easy promise Will, we will always be friends, always.”

He smiles and imagines Hannibal’s smile, his lips and his mouth. “I will always be here for you.”

“As I for you.” Silence settles between them as they listen to each other’s breathing, his fingers absently touching his lips, remembering. “You should go back to sleep, Will.”

“I don’t know if I can.”

“Yes, you can. Dream of me, okay?”

“I always do,” he whispers, and it’s like he can hear Hannibal’s smile.

“Me too,” Hannibal whispers back. “I’ll stay on the line until you fall asleep.”

“As if you were here with me.”

“I wish I was more than anything, Will. I wish I were.”

A tear starts to fall from his eyes, and he wipes it away with a hand. “I’m going to miss you.”

“Will, I will miss you every day, every moment. I do anyway, I miss you even when I know I will see you.”

“I know. I feel the same.” He wants to tell Hannibal that he loves him. He wants to run into his arms and never leave, but he can’t, so instead, he keeps his eyes closed and imagines he is next to the alpha. He listens to his breathing and lets it wash over him until his dreams are

filled with the weight and warmth of Hannibal’s hands on his skin and the soft brush of his lips.

Chapter End Notes

Comments are Hannibal's hands on Will's hips, and kudos are every growl uttered from Hannibal's feral lips...

Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

> “I wish I was there to hug you. Imagine I am okay?”
> He closes his eyes and imagines Will’s arms around his, the feeling of the omega’s lithe body close to his, the way Will’s hair smells, the way his skin tastes, and he smiles.
> “Yes, I am imagining that right now.”
> “Me too,” Will whispers. “You should get back. You can call me later if you need to. I will be up late reading.”
> “You are right. I should. Thank you for this. Hearing your voice made me feel better.”
> “Glad to be able to help. Hannibal?”
> “Yes.”
> In the pause before Will speaks, Hannibal can hear a thousand words, and just three echo in his head as much as he tries to ignore them.
> Will sighs before saying, “I am thinking of you.”
> He smiles and can feel the words they both want to say underneath, “me too.”

Chapter Notes

> It's been an age I know! I'd apologise but I have no idea if anyone is even noticing this fic anymore! if you are hello! I appreciate you still being here. xxx

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He leaves the hospital in a daze. His Aunt is very ill. He has been here for a few weeks now. Things with her have taken a downturn, and they are unsure how long she has. It is strange to see someone as strong and vibrant as his Aunt fade away like this, and it brings back too many memories of Bedelia. He tries to push those thoughts away, but they follow him wherever he goes. He walks along the Neris River as the sun is setting. The park is emptying, and the tourists are returning to hotels. The water is still as he looks out across the river. The ghost of Bedelia walks alongside him, quietly and constantly. As much as he misses her, he misses Will more.

He stops and sits on a small, empty bench in a quiet area of the park and takes out his phone. He wraps his coat around him. It’s getting very cold here now, and he can feel the freezing rain about to fall. He looks at his phone, uncertain he can feel his wife's gaze as she sits next to him. *You should call him.* Her voice whispers through his mind like silk, and he smiles.

He knows she would want him to be happy, and he wishes he could. He also knows that Will is the first person since his wife's death that holds that possibility for him.

Sighing, he finds Will's number and calls. He needs to hear the omega's voice, even if it's just for a moment.

"Hey", Will answers, "how are you?"

He smiles at that but also feels like he might burst into tears. He laughs awkwardly and rubs his face with his hand. "A mess."

"Oh Hannibal, is she worse?"

"Yeah, I don't think it will be long. I'm going back in a bit. I just needed some space."

"That's ok, that's good. I am so sorry."

"Tell me something to distract me."

Will laughs. "Um, okay, not much going on here. I am back with my Dad, but I am going to stay with Alana from tomorrow for the rest of the break."

"Have you seen any of your ex? I was worried about you running into them?"

"No, that is partly why I want to go and stay with Alana. In case he tried anything. It doesn't really feel like home anymore. Anyway. Margot is joining us there too in a few days. It will be nice to see them."

There is silence between them, and he rushes out before he can stop the words from leaving his lips. "I miss you."

He can almost hear Will's smile. He closes his eyes and imagines it as Will replies, "I miss you too. How is your sister?"

"Mischa, she's well. It's nice to spend time with her despite the circumstances."

"That's good."

"It's nice to hear your voice," he says because it is, and he wishes he could hear it every day. He longs to hear Will sing again, hold him, and kiss those soft lips.

"Yours too. Where are you?"

"By the water, despite the cold, it's beautiful here."

"Will you get snow?"

"Maybe it feels cold enough. Where are you?"

"At home in my bedroom trying to catch up on some reading."

“You don’t have to say that just because I am your Professor.”

Will laughs, and it makes his heart sing to hear it. “I know, but I am. I am so behind and know I will get nothing done at Alana’s.”

“Anything I can help you with?”

“Just making my way through some music therapy books.”

“Some therapy before bed.”

Will laughs again. “yes, indeed.”

“It’s good to hear your laugh.”

“I wish I was there to hug you. Imagine I am okay?”

He closes his eyes and imagines Will’s arms around his, the feeling of the omega’s lithe body close to his, the way Will’s hair smells, the way his skin tastes, and he smiles. “Yes, I am imagining that right now.”

“Me too,” Will whispers. “You should get back. You can call me later if you need to. I will be up late reading.”

“You are right. I should. Thank you for this. Hearing your voice made me feel better.”

“Glad to be able to help. Hannibal?”

“Yes.”

In the pause before Will speaks, Hannibal can hear a thousand words, and just three echo in his head as much as he tries to ignore them.

Will sighs before saying, “I am thinking of you.”

He smiles and can feel the words they both want to say underneath, “me too.”

“Okay, bye, Hannibal.”

“Bye.” He hangs up the phone, and his wife smiles at him. He shakes his head and stands up, returning to the hospital just as it starts to snow.

***

His sister, Mischa, is waiting for him as he enters the hospital. “She is sleeping now," she says as she hugs Hannibal.

“Sorry, I just had to get out for a moment.”

Mischa breaks the hug, “I understand, and so does she. Let's go get a beer and dinner, yes?”

“Yes.” He smiles, and they both leave.

They sit across from each other at a small restaurant, sipping beers and eating. “So, are you going to tell me about them?”

“Who?” Hannibal thought he had been subtle, but he should have known that Mischa would have noticed.

“This person you sneak off to call.” Mischa sips at her beer and smiles.

Hannibal attempts to act casually, but they both know he is failing. “I didn’t know you had noticed.”

“It’s a good thing, Hannibal. I am glad you have met someone.”

“It’s complicated.” This is the simplest way of putting it, Hannibal thinks.

“How? Because of Bedelia? You know she would have wanted you to be happy.” He knows that Bedelia always told Mischa before she passed to make sure Hannibal didn’t wallow.

“I know. I am just unsure whether I am over her or can ever be.” He still sees her all the time, he still feels her around him, he cannot let her go, he doesn’t want to. As much as he wants to be with Will, he knows it’s not fair to him.

“You won’t ever be over her. She was the love of your life, but you can move past her, fall in love again, and allow yourself to love again. It doesn’t mean you will forget her.”

“I know, but there are other factors.” Mischa smiles knowingly, and he should know not much gets past his sister. “What else?”

“They are younger.”

“How much younger?”

“He is probably about ten years younger.”

“He?”

“Yes, he, not unexpected. You know I’ve been with both men and women.”

“Is he a beta?” Mischa asks.

“Does it matter?” He does not want to mention that Will is an omega. He doesn't want to betray Will’s trust even though he knows his sister would be discreet.

“No, I was just wondering. You can keep being mysterious about it! That aged gap is not too bad, though,” she waves her hand in dismissal, “so he is in his twenties. You are in your thirties, it's fine.” A flicker of understanding comes across his face, “he is a student.”

Hannibal smiles lamely, and Mischa laughs. “oh, Hannibal, you know how to pick them!”

“I know, I know. Nothing has really happened between us.” Except for the most amazing kiss he has ever had and the fact that whenever he is around Will, all he wants to do is touch him, dream about him most nights, and consume all his thoughts.

“Something has happened, though?”

“I have kissed him twice, that’s all.” He doesn’t mention the times he has tried to kiss Will, the time he stole his glasses so they could be alone. “Good kisses, though?”

“Yes, spectacular kisses.” He thinks of the last one again, the feeling and taste of him.

Mischa laughs again. “Well, it’s nice to hear you talk about someone like this again, even if it is, as you say, complicated.”

“I feel like I’m torn in two, you know? I am devastated about Mum, but I also feel this happiness about him. Every time I speak to him, the feeling gets stronger, and I know I need to pull back from this. I’m not ready, and he is a student, but Mischa, god, this is the first time since Bedelia that I feel as if I could fall for someone. It’s terrifying.” It truly is, and saying it out loud makes it seem more real. He needs to figure out what he is going to do about this. They can’t keep on like this for the next few years, and then what? Will is young and is going to have a successful career. He knows it. Will has a lot of talent. He doesn’t want to hold him back. Will has a right to live his life.

“Of course it is, brother. You went through something that someone of your age never expects to go through: the life you had planned was taken away, and the woman you loved died. You have suffered trauma, and the thought of being vulnerable again would be scary, but you can’t live your life in the past. You know you can’t. You know Bedelia would be so angry with you that you have waited this long. Who cares that he is your student? There will be a time when he won’t be in a few years.”

“I daren’t think that far ahead.” He admits, though he is starting to.

“What about him? Does he feel the same?”

“I think so.” He knows Will does. He can feel it, and it’s terrifying that Will would feel this way for him. He doesn’t want him to. He wants him to go and live his life away from his trauma and broken heart.

“Have you asked him?”.

“Not really. We talked about it but decided we needed to be friends.”

“Was this before or after you last kissed him?”

Hannibal thinks of the amazing last kiss they shared in his office and smiles. “Both, I guess.”

Mischa laughs again. “You have it bad, my brother, I can tell.”

“I have no idea what to do, Mischa. I have no clue. I am a mess.”

“You have always been a mess. Nothing is new there. What is his name?”

“Will.”

“So what are you going to do about Will?”

“I have no idea.”

“We need more beer,” Mischa says, flags the waitress down, and Hannibal nods and laughs.

Their Aunt passes away a few days later, and it’s as devastating, if not more so than they thought. Mischa and Hannibal realise they are properly orphans now, their parents having died when they were young. They drink together, laugh and cry, and relive memories of their force of nature Aunt. The funeral is both horrible and amazing. So many people came to pay tribute, and the wake was filled with laughter and tears, just as she would have wanted.

He stays with Mischa’ and her family, playing with the children and being a part of the family. It feels good. He feels as if he may be healing. Haunted though as he is by his wife, her presence is lessened but still a source of comfort to him. He calls Will still, and they talk late into the night. He watches the snow fall and imagines Will standing next to him, his smile and his laugh. He misses Will, but he is not ready to leave his bubble. He stays after Christmas and decides not to return until the final term. Will agrees it makes sense but misses him.

Mischa and Hannibal are sitting by the fire. Everyone else has gone to bed. They drink brandy and stare into the flames.

“So, what are your plans?” Mischa asks in that way she has of making the question sound loaded.

“Have I outstayed my welcome?”

“No, never. You know you are welcome here anytime; we love having you here. I also know that you have a life you should probably return to.”

Hannibal shrugs. “Do I? I don’t know what kind of life I had there.” He has been thinking about it often and wonders if he was hiding there, too.

“Yes, you did. You were starting to be happy, Hannibal. The play at the society went well, didn’t it? You have been mentoring this student, Margot. She must need you.”

“She doesn’t, not really. She has surpassed any advice I could give her, anything I could teach her.” Margot had been running the drama society in his absence. In some ways, she had been

anyway. “I just don’t know if I want to be there anymore. If I want to teach.” He had always enjoyed the lectures and mentoring, but the bureaucracy and politics started grating him. The thought of returning to that did not appeal to him at all.

“What about Will?”

“What about him?” It would be better for Will if he never returned. Then, the omega could move on, find someone else, or focus on his career.

“Hannibal.”

“What? What can I offer him? Emotional baggage? It’s not fair to him. He is young. He needs to live his life.”

“You are also still young just because you act like an old man. You forget you have a whole life to lead. Fine, if teaching isn’t what you want to do, even better, he wouldn’t be your student then. I would say that it is not wise to make life-changing decisions when you are still grieving.”

“That’s what you said when I wanted to move after Bedelia died.”

“Yes, and I was right then. You stayed, got your PhD, and then moved when ready.”

“So wise one, what is your advice now?” Hannibal laughs.

“I think you should go back and teach out the next term and then see what happens, see how you feel about it. I think you should stop hiding, stop not living your life. You are too haunted here, too many memories. I can see it when I look at you. Go back, see Will, work with Margot, mentor her, live your life for a while and try to figure out what makes you happy.”

“Easier said than done.”

“Yes, as all good things in life are, you will figure it out, and you know you can come back here anytime you need to.”

Chapter End Notes

Kudos are Hannibal's sighs when he hears Will's voice and comments are Will's pauses that contain so much unsaid.

Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

> “I know, but right now, all I want to do is grab you, kiss you, take you to my bed, and the rest of it be damned. I’ve thought about you every day for the last few months, and now I am here with you, and I can’t have you. It’s worse.”
> “Look, you have only just come back. You need to give yourself a chance. We know there is something between us. We both feel it, but we must take this slow, okay? I should go.”
> “Will, wait”, Hannibal grabs his hand, “I’m sorry, none of this is your fault.”
> He looks down at his hand and squeezes it slightly. “it’s not yours either. I’ll call you later.”
> “Come over? Please?”
> Will shakes his head and bites his lip. “you know I can’t.”

Chapter Notes

> I know nothing but tumbleweeds for months and then two whole chapters!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal opens his front door, and his house feels musty. It’s been so long since he has been home that the dust has settled here, and it almost feels as if he is intruding. He turns the lights on and stands in the living room, feeling like a stranger. He is shocked out of his revelry by his phone and smiles when he sees Will calling him.

“Hello, Will,” Hannibal says.

“Hi, are you home?”

“Yes. Its feels, strange… empty.”

“Please don’t tell me you are standing in the living room feeling like a stranger.”

“How did you know that?”

“I know you.”

Hannibal laughs. “What should I do?”

“Make tea, unpack, and put on some music. You will feel at home again in no time.”

“Okay.”

There is a silence, and Will smiles. “I can’t believe I’m going to see you tomorrow.”

“You could see me now. I can message you my address or come and get you.”

A pause, an intake of breath. “No, that’s not a good idea. You need to get settled. Did you do the lesson plan?”

“Yes, finished it on the plane.”

“Okay, so relax, have some tea. Do you have tea?”

“Yes, I think so.”

“Okay, do that, unpack, sleep, and I will see you tomorrow.”

“Can you stay after class?”

“Yes.”

“I am a little worried I won’t be able to concentrate on the lecture.”

Will laughs. “I’ll sit at the back. You won’t even know I’m there.”

“I always know you are there,” he says. He can always feel Will when the omega is close, almost as if Will has become a sense memory, moulded into the folds of his mind.

Will pauses, and Hannibal can tell Will wants to say something, but the omega changes the subject instead. “Margot is excited to have you back, by the way.”

“I know she called me before I got on the flight.”

“She has missed you.”

“I missed her too, but don’t tell her.”

“Promise.”

“Will?”

“Yes.”

“Come over.”

“No, Hannibal, you know what would happen if I did.”

“Okay, okay, yes, you are right, sorry.”

Will laughs again, and Hannibal wishes he could bottle the sound.

"Tea, unpack, sleep, and I'll see you tomorrow."

"I can't wait."

"Me neither."

As soon as Will hangs up, Hannibal messages him his address, just in case.

As promised, Will sits at the back of the lecture hall with Alana, who he is beyond glad is with him because he is so nervous his hands are clammy. He feels like a giddy schoolgirl, and he knows he needs to get a hold of herself. All he could hear was the alpha's voice last night asking him to come over. When he received the message with Hannibal's address, he almost went over there.

"Breathe," Alana says, and Will smiles and does as she suggests.

"I don't know what's wrong with me. I speak to him every day. I should not be this nervous."

Alana rolls her eyes. "A voice on the end of the phone is one thing, but you haven't seen each other since, well before he left, and you well…"

"Yeah, not helping." Will sighs as the memory of that kiss still feels like it happened yesterday.

When Hannibal walks into the lecture hall, everyone claps a welcome, and Will smiles at how confident Hannibal looks, but then the alpha's eyes find Will's and his heart skips a beat as his stomach flips. They exchange a brief smile, and then Will looks away, smiling at how good it feels to see him. The alpha looks the same, even better than he remembered.

Will stays until everyone has left the lecture hall. Hannibal is pretending to put away papers, knowing Will is waiting. Once alone, Hannibal perches on the edge of his desk and looks up at where he is sitting, staring at him.

"Will," Hannibal says and smiles.

It takes all he has to not run down the stairs and throw his arms around him. He can barely look at him. Listening to the alpha's voice for the past hour has been the most exquisite torture.

"Hi," Will replies and manages to look at him before he laughs, a nervous laugh. "I'm nervous, I don't know why."

“Me too. Come down, I promise to behave.” That smile will be the death of Will, he is absolutely sure.

He gathers his things and slowly walks down the stairs and towards Hannibal. The alpha moves to the door, shuts it, and returns to the desk. “It’s good to see you,” Will says as he places his bag on the floor and stands opposite him. “Can I hug you? All the times I wanted to.”

Hannibal grabs Will, putting his arms around him. He returns his embrace, and they both sigh with relief. They stay like that, just feeling comfortable in each other’s arms. It feels strange, but it is also like coming home.

“How are you?” Hannibal asks as he holds Will tight to him.

“Better now. You?”

“Same.”

“I can’t believe you are here.”

“I know. I have been imagining this moment for so long it feels surreal.”

Being in his presence feels intoxicating, and he feels like he is falling all over again. Hannibal moves his hand to the cup on Will’s face. He leans his forehead against the alpha’s. Will takes a deep breath as Hannibal brushes his lips against Will’s. He moves his hand to the alpha’s chest and pushes Hannibal away slightly. “wait,” Will says and takes a step back.

“Will.” The alpha’s voice is breathless and filled with so much longing. Will feels like he might drown in it.

“I… I just…this is…” Will can’t order his thoughts, not with him this close. He can feel the alpha’s breath on his skin and his hand on his face, his arm around him pulling him closer, and god, he wants to give in but knows they need to breathe, take a moment.

“I know, I’m sorry, I dreamt about you every night,” Hannibal whispers, and his voice is like the softest caress that Will wants to fall into desperately.

“Me too.” Will brings his hand up to run his fingers through Hannibal’s hair. Those soft strands are just as he remembered. “It’s longer, your hair.” Hannibal nods, and he smiles. “I like it.”

“Will.”

“I’m glad you’re back.”

“Me too.”

“I’m happy you are glad you are back.” Will knew Hannibal was worried about returning and that the alpha was questioning his life and what makes him happy.

“I knew I would be happy to see you.” Hannibal smiles, and before Will can even think about what the alpha is doing, Hannibal pulls him closer, presses his lips to Will’s, and kisses him so softly and slowly that he melts into the alpha’s arms.

“We shouldn’t be doing this here,” Will whispers, his hands still in Hannibal’s hair. The alpha starts to kiss Will’s neck, nuzzling at his scent gland, Will moans.

“You could come back to my house. We could just talk,’ Hannibal says as the alpha brushes a fang over the swollen bump of Will’s scent gland.

Will moans as Hannibal places a small lick on the curve of his neck. “That doesn’t sound likely, does it?” Will says in a whisper.

Hannibal laughs and leans his head back. Will removes his hands from the alpha’s hair, but Hannibal still holds him. “We could just talk,” Hannibal says. “We have been for the last few months. I would miss that if we stopped.”

“I am not going back to yours. I am not sure I can trust either of us.”

“I hate this, Will, l hate this.” In frustration, Hannibal steps back from him and runs his hands through his hair. “I should just quit. I am not even sure I want this job anyway.”

Will feels a prickling anger on the back of his neck. “if you want to quit your job, then quit it, but don’t quit it because of me. What if you resent me?”

“I wouldn’t.”

“That’s not the only obstacle anyway, and you know it.”

“I know, but right now, all I want to do is grab you, kiss you, take you to my bed, and the rest of it be damned. I’ve thought about you every day for the last few months, and now I am here with you, and I can’t have you. It’s worse.”

“Look, you have only just come back. You need to give yourself a chance. We know there is something between us. We both feel it, but we must take this slow, okay? I should go.”

“Will, wait”, Hannibal grabs his hand, “I’m sorry, none of this is your fault.”

He looks down at his hand and squeezes it slightly. “it’s not yours either. I’ll call you later.”

“Come over? Please?”

Will shakes his head and bites his lip. “you know I can’t.”

Leaving that lecture hall is the hardest thing he has ever done, and he feels like weeping with happiness that Hannibal is back but also with frustration because it is worse.

He is pacing up and down his living room, feeling like a ghost in his house. He is trying to think, to order his thoughts, but all he can see is Will. He wants the omega here in his arms, and it's making him crazy to be back, so close to him, and unable to hold him. When they would speak on the phone, he was always aware that Will wasn't in the same country, which made it easier. Now they are in the same city. He thinks about the kisses they have shared, the small moments. He needs more and has never needed anything more in his life.

Calling him is a bad idea; he knows that it will not end well if he calls Will now in this state. He needs to get a hold of himself. He needs to take a breath.

Alana and Margot are sitting in the pub with Will, who has barely said a word since he wandered in about half an hour ago. They give each other knowing looks and sighs, all of which Will attempts to ignore. Eventually, it is Margot who gives up and breaks the silence.

"Will. This is ridiculous, you know that, right?"

Will gives her a look that makes her look straight down at her beer again.

"Will," Alana says in a gentle voice. "What happened?"

"The usual. I don't know why I thought anything would change. He is an emotional mess, and I have no idea how to feel about any of it."

"Yes, you do," Margot mutters, and Alana shoots her a look. "No, but come on, Alana's wrath be damned, he's my friend, so I am saying this. Will he loves you? He has loved you pretty much from the moment he met you. Yes, he is a mess. Yes, he is freaked out; his wife died, and he never thought he would love again, and then he meets you, his student and falls for you. Give him a break if he isn't handling it well. He has just lost his mother."

Will looks up at Margot with fire in his eyes. "I know that, Margot, that's what I said to him. I am not rushing into something with someone who is still grieving. You don't think I don't love him too because I am not sure I have ever felt like this, and it's terrifying."

"I'm sorry, okay? You are my friends, and I want you to be happy. I know it's complicated, life is, but if you love each other, then you should be together," Margot says, and Will wants to scream because he wishes beyond the telling of it that it was that simple.

"Sometimes that's just not enough." Will replies and stands up, leaving despite the protests of Alana and Margot. As he leaves, he hears Alana shouting at Margot and feels bad for putting them in this position. He decides just to be alone.

Will walks until he finds herself outside of Hannibal's door. Staring at it, he sighs and blinks away some tears. Taking his phone out of his bag, he calls the alpha.

The alpha answers almost immediately. His voice is broken, and it makes Will ache to hear it. "I am so glad you called. I'm sorry about earlier."

"I'm outside your door," Will says in a breath.

“You are? I’m coming to hang on.”

“No, wait, don’t…” Will can’t finish that sentence because he knows if Hannibal opens the door, he will not be able to stop himself from going inside.

“I won’t do anything. Just come inside. You can’t stand out there.”

“Hannibal, please just,” he can feel himself breaking into a million pieces. He doesn’t even know why he is here or why he called him. “I just needed to hear your voice.”

Hannibal opens the door and stands before Will, and he can’t breathe.

“Come inside,” Hannibal says and hangs up the phone. Will hangs up his phone, too and places it in his bag. He doesn’t move any closer. They stood looking at each other, hoping and not hoping the other will make the first move. “Please, Will.” His voice is soft, and it pulls at him.

“Okay, wait, what would that mean if I came inside?” Will is aware his voice sounds desperate, and he wishes it didn’t, but right now, he is vibrating and cannot seem to find himself.

“It can mean whatever you want it to mean. We can just talk.”

“No, no more talking. All we do is talk, but we don’t say anything, do we?”

“What do you mean? You know how I feel about you!”

“Do I? Do I, though? You kiss me and say you care about me, but I don’t know what this means. We spoke on the phone daily for months, and now we are back here at the same place we were when you left. We are going in circles. I can’t keep doing this.” Will feels like he could scream. This shouldn’t be this hard.

“Will.” The alpha says his name like a plea. “I want you. I need you, my omega, please.”

He looks at Hannibal as those words he has longed to hear tumble from the alpha’s lips like a prayer, and he wants more than anything to pick them up, to worship them. “If I come inside, what happens afterwards if we do this?” He keeps his voice a whisper, and hope drips from his eyes as tears when he manages to meet Hannibal’s gaze.

The alpha steps out of the doorway towards him. “What do you want to happen?”

Will looks at him with pleading eyes. “I don’t know. I just know we can’t go back to how we were before. We can’t pretend that we are just friends. I can’t pretend I don’t dream about you every night, that every time I see you, I don’t want to kiss you, that every time I speak to you, I don’t close my eyes and conjure the image of you next to me.”

“So let’s not.” The alpha moves closer to him, puts his hand on the back of Will’s neck, and pulls him closer, his other arm snaking around Will’s waist, pulling him close. His hands are in the alpha’s hair, and neither notices it has started to rain.

Chapter End Notes

Kudos is the tea Hannibal makes for himself thinking of Will and comments are his fangs as they drag over Will's scent gland.

End Notes

comments are every raindrop on Will Graham's skin that Hannibal wants to lick and kudos is the flush on Hannibal's cheeks are he tries to regain his composure....

More soon xxx

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